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Diary, reflections of a historian,while compiling history
of Frontier Corps of Pakistan North Western Frontier
amidst War on Terror

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First Two Weeks

I am sitting at Infusion Cell in Balahisar Fort, it is popularly known as Confusion Cell, outside it is pleasant, and being Friday the scouts are preparing for Friday prayers. Next to me the scout is watching the last night recordings of jet aircraft poundings of miscreants hideouts in Tirah Valley not very far from here. The whole area is not visible to operators through the Google Earth thus an aerial reconnaissance of such areas is carried out using C-130 aircraft of air force or King Jet of army aviation. These videos are then scrutinised here and targets selected for air force or artillery. Sounds impressive and it is but it is being done in a relaxed manner with a pair of parrots also sharing the cell apart from four wall mounted screens which are now being used for cable watching.

This cell was incorporated with the help of Americans who brought all this equipment , a huge coloured printer for printing maps, screens to monitor the live video of drone or other aerial information or mission, in short a kind of their own operational room. Now they have gone and work has slowed down but now it has been tuned to own requirement and technical capability.

21st May 2013. FC Mess Peshawar, 2300 hours.

I came here almost two weeks ago. Electricity has just arrived, it will likely to stay for another two hours before it runs away for an hour and then comes back, this drama will last whole night and it is going on for last five years. It is hot and terrible; not surprisingly the ruling political parties have been washed away in this general elections for this sole reason. One has to think about the millions living in the inner and old city with having no means to buy the generator or any other source to keep the lights working and running the affairs of daily life.

This is my third night here in the mess, I am here to write the history of the Frontier Corps, I came driving in my Mercedes from Islamabad, after spending hours with Jehangir mechanic, all the way my eyes were on the temperature gauge and I did not had a sigh of relief even once. My ordeal can be understood only by those who have old cars and especially those which if break down on highway can neither be pushed and nor be rectified.

All along it was darkness, town and villages giving bleak look although the euphoria of having the first free and fair election in which the Patahns have

elected a new political party Tehreek Insaff of Imran Khan into power in the province with Nawaz Shariff in power at centre, [electricity has gone again after just fifteen minutes] just imagine the state of mind of ordinary person in such situation. It is inhumane, barbaric and unjustifiable in this heat with modern construction forestalling any movement of air.

The very first night which was two nights ago in this mess , I had to open the windows which I believe were closed since years as is obvious from the dust, my room is called Tochi , it si the last room on the top floor with windows on both ends, one lacks fly and other was jammed. One can bear the weather provided if one lives accordingly but unfortunately our lifestyle is all too banking upon the air

Bala Hisar Fort

I am sitting inside it right now rather I am at its top. I came here first time in 1993 with my wife, son who was just few months old and mother in law; not much has changed inside the fort or outside , it is the beauty of the city that it gives such an impression on the other hand quite a work has been done inside the fort with a new mosque and new lines for scouts both made artistically in classical red brick style; it was done by last inspector general of Frontier Corps Major General Nadir Zeb.

My job is to compile the history of Frontier Corps , while going through the history compilation of Tochi Scouts I read quite a lot and as such I can claim to have a fair amount of knowledge about the area and the corps. I know that in 1951 the efforts were made to have the history of the corps, again in sixties, seventies and then in nineties same efforts were floated which finally resulted in the publishing of book frontier Guardian by Major Muhammad Nawaz. However when I inquired nothing was traceable regarding those efforts or data. On the other hand , the 11 Corps started or initiated a plan to archive the history and similarly army under General Kayani also took keen interest in the archiving and establishing a museum, it is these external factors which resulted in FC having a very sound and good draft of present conflict.. Efforts of Colonel Mamun, Lieutenant Colonel Azhar of education corps are worth mentioning in the compilation of the draft. The input all came from the corps and now I intend putting all of it in a chronological fashion.

There is a museum also here, a unique one in terms of design and quite rich in terms of the artefacts all dealing with FC. A small very small library is also existing next to the museum; other than this it is all bleak.

The weather in these two weeks remained hot very hot but then all of a sudden it rain last week and

now it is bearable although the famous dust layer is still hanging around the Peshawar Bowl. Peshawar is a rather strange kind of vale, it is bounded on all sides by medium level mountains but the bowl it self is very wide and very fertile, the circumference must be in tens of miles. As I see it now towards the northern direction all I can see from this height is a sea of green with attitude almost level, a dust wall obstructs my view but when it is clear as it was yesterday then the mountains can be observed which are approximately thirty –forty miles away. Through these mountains exists passes or more precisely the river flows like River Kabul which runs in a west-east direction and joins with river swat almost ten –fifteen miles north east of Peshawar at Charsadda. The famous Khyber Pass is on the west of city, the pass leading towards the Chitral onwards to the Wakhan is in northern direction and can be detoured via Mardan in the eastern direction also.

This is the natural lake of human habitat, the water pours down from the high mountains of central asia which looks surprising and deceptively close from Bala Hisar and this the magic of Peshawar that one tends to shrink the distance towards north. The crow distance is not much in any case, Chitral is 45 minutes away on a propeller driven aircraft, Kabul is also at asme distance. Kashmir also looks closer; the hard fact is that once you

cross River Indus than you are in a different frame of mind.

Balahisar Fort Days

Most mysterious past like many pathan, there is very little written record about it not even in provincial archives. The most solid evidence is a black and white picture of probably first afghan war, surprisingly rare painting is also missing at least in the Frontier Corps at present. The picture shows a mud bricked fort of almost a replica of present , which is brick lined by the British when they took over the Balahisar in 1845. Apparently it was made in present form between 1850-1865; for the reason that no such account is mentioned in Colonel Warburton's account of almost a quarter of century lasting till the end of century.

Peshawar and Balahisar are both interwoven with each other in the quilt of history and both have to be analysed as such. Peshawar deviates against the universal wisdom of having city being evolved on the bank of river ; Lahore & Multan are classic examples , all three have forts and an ancient past. Peshawar thus was never a planned city and nor a trade route; Charsadda which lies almost ten miles north of Peshawar on the banks of River Kabul and river Swat is the more logical old hub of movements between the Indus Valley and higher mountainous civilization.

Balahisar Fort thus emerged as the southern out post of the Charsadda guarding the Khyber Pass, Tirah {present day Khyber Agency}; their were further satellite outpost forts as well. The big question is why Balahisar is mud bricked in 1840 picture; almost all the forts were bricked lined, look at Attock Fort built by Akbar the Great in 1630 on the banks of river Indus, Rohtas Fort by Sher Shah Suri in 1540 thus the mystery deepens as to why this important fort was not fortified or why Peshawar was not given the importance to have fortification.

Peshawar's rise to present afme starts with the Afghan Wars before that it was just a caravan serai marching towards or down from the mountains through Khyber Pass or more precisely the Afridi Tribe along with Shinwari, Shalmanzi and Mullagori. Mohmand tribe's tarakzai branch owns 14000 acres in four villages around Peshawar. British experience from 1850 onwards at Peshawar was not pleasant mainly due to poor hygienic conditions of the city which chiefly was due to lack of water source. Municipal committees and Deputy Commissioners dug well in the city for drinking water just like we have water purification plants today at different parts f city. Cholera and other epidemics including malaria were common. Theft and robbery were the favourite past time of the vagabond tribesmen. Religious sentiments were high but always within limit

only four attempted murders on British officers in twenty years till 1899.

Michni and Nawagai passes are the historical passes through which the Alexander the Great's army marched down. It should be kept in mind that there were two flanks, one led by Alexander himself which marched down towards Peshawar in a wide northern move through Nawagai pass, the other two Greek generals than led the other prong through the Michni and Khyber Passes.; all marched and followed with water source {River Kabul & Swat} less the Khyber Pass formation which debouches on to the Peshawar. It should be kept in mind that nothing of Alexander's history has survived in its original version and the best considered among academic world is that of Arrian's but it was written after almost 300 years in 70 AD , there fore nothing is authentic other than the dictates of geography.

One of the oldest Buddhist ruins are located here including the Ashoka's pillars in the close vicinity of Peshawar but even in more close proximity of Charsadda, the Takht Bhai ruins. Similarly one such stupa is also on the top of a hillock overlooking the Khyber Pass road connecting Peshawar with Kabul.

Fort is in three layers each higher than the other till gets an elevation of 200 feet , the elevation of Peshawar itself is 1800 feet thus a good observatory is

created, one feels secure inside and it is peaceful too a bit isolated. I am now having a fort mentality. My scanning has been constantly towards the north-western quarters because I sit in Infusion Cell which has a glass window panel overlooking the western direction. Sitting on revolving chair one gets the feeling of being on a ship deck . The horizon is all dusty with visibility uptill twenty miles . By evening it further improves and silhouettes of Khuber becomes obvious. On the south of Peshawar are the Afridis of Dara Adam Khel who in a crescent encircles the Peshawar till the centre of Balahisar Fort entrance gate, from there onwards the Mohmand's area starts. Shinwaris and Mulagori are another two tribes who lives on the northern edge of Afridis , they thus control the mouth of River Kabul, the left bank is with Mohmand Tribe.

At the gate there is one sentry wearing white helmet who opens the gate but I in the first day had gone through the whole procedure , even now when I go there by rickshaw I had to follow the procedure. It is okay nothing extraordinary about it , but I am sure they can alert others. The outer wall of the fort especially the front face has been given a face lift by Nadir Zeb Major General. The present entrance is ascending and winding with three turns or ghulam Gardesh'. In reality the fort had an old entrance similar to Lahore Fort's entrance but on less grandeur, it is visible today and stands out along

the whole front wall; this seems to be the royal entrance and the present entrance is at slightly lower level and used for the troops movement; fort had gates at each layer which was closed down at the night, this procedure is not in vogue as only one main gate is closed . Other day while coming out of the canteen which is located at the top plateau as well, I noticed a sliding pathway with a gate at the end, the length is not more than hundred feet. Thus other exist from the fort. At present the toilets are constructed on the second layer which are used by the troops. This agte is being used for that purpose. I went down and observe the layer, it is wide enough to have accommodation as well. On the eastern side is the grave or ziaart of a holy man ; it was a graveyard in the past. The civil population or the fort attendant had their accommodation on the second layer. This included soldiers, followers and officials. It provides ample space all along the citadel. The first layer similarly must have been the residential area of followers camp, stables and so on.

Living inside the Balahisar

On my very first day I requested Colonel Mamoon to allot me a living room inside the fort as I wanted to savour the lifestyle of the fort, there are two rooms one is under use of fort security officer and other is a small duty officer bunk thus I have to live inside the mess.

The top plateau is wide enough to hold a divisional headquarters and in old time should have been the royal residence. There is hardly any building of old time left untouched, all have false ceilings, glass windows, the toilets are hardly attached with offices at least in old pattern construction. I had a round of the area, first I had to find the tailor to get my clothes stitched and from there I went in search of cobbler and this took me to the remote, neglected and hidden part of the area. Tailor is in the barrack where as the cobbler has a tin roof hut. The field mess kitchen is impressive. And so are the waiters. There are very few visitors during the office time although there is a regular flow of visitors for IGFC. I have met him twice in last two weeks and I am very at ease with him. He likes to talk and listen as well, young and courteous. He has no idea the kind of mental torture I had with the mess and military transport branches. His office is spacious, they have created a kind of garden by having plants outside the main glass wall and then putting a tarpal over it. The staff officer and a visitor waiting room the old jirga room are part of the office block. Another office block which is a new construction houses full colonels and deputy, all have glass windows and attached toilets.

Jirga room and adjoining infusion cell are new construction, jirga hall is impressive but washrooms stinks, the main mosque and living lines are the centre of

attraction, both stylish and elegant in design, mosque now occupies the centre of the courtyard which is at a lower level along with the vehicles parking area/

There is a one dish lunch everyday which I am not sure whether it is on the house or on officers, in fact FC is so big hearted in this manner and that one often thinks of it in such pattern. Modern mind may call it wastage of resources or accountability or Tax payers money and so on but let it not be forgotten that everything is not related with tax money only , FC captures huge quantity of drugs and other smuggled items which enhances the national exchequer as well. The point to bring home is that when you live in old building like Balahisar Fort than your life pattern and working habits are influenced by historical values.

Peshawar is a scary city more so when you read enough to understand that everyone is not that classic pathan who will protect your life at the peril of his own. We think that as long as one is protecting your life he is good , it is not like here in Peshawar. It is primitive in nature to say, dusty and dirty. I spent three days in Saddar , one day searching for a bag and next for a digital camera.

I came to Peshawar first in 1979 with a school debating team which included myself, Habib Ansari and Ahmed Hayat the present GOC of 40 Division. We had a

walk in the Saddar , ate flying saucers which were sandwich in nature and generally admire the city which looked so different from Karachi from we have come. Pen pistols were the favourite item for youngsters and I was no exception. I had heard about Peshawar in 1972 rather it will not be out of context if I say that from my childhood in Punjab I was warned about these patahans , they kidnap children was the biggest fear inculcated in our minds. Later on in Karachi I came to know that the family which lives on the ground floor, one widow, her son , daughter and many others, her husband was killed by a hired killer who after killing just walk away to Ilaka Ghair; my biggest fantasy at that time was to see this ilaka ghair and what all I can manage there where there is no law.

In 1981 I came here twice once I stayed with my parents friend at Ghazi near Tarbeal who took us all along the frontier including Peshawar and Swat, next I came with my uncle and family and again we went to Swat. I had a unusual experience then, I was a teen ager and I walked towards a spot where patahn families were having picnic and I was warned by a member of that family wearing weapon to buzz off and I did. My aunt was posted here her husband was a colonel in then martial law and they were residing in the MPA hostel. I then ventured into ilaka ghair on a motorcycle. I had a

miraculous survival after I crashed my bike on the road due to over speeding.

In military academy the cadets comes here, I also did but my real stay was here in 1992 when I was posted here in the flying squadron , was newly married and hooked onto hashish. I saw the city at night , at dawn at all times, I flew over it un countless times, read about it, attended local parties also, had a date with a pathan girl also yet I had no pathan friend in real sense other than Javed who had a weapon and Hashish shop in ilaqa ghair which is next to the Hayatabad. The old Bara or ilaqa ghair was towards the south west of the city and it was half a n hour drive with dusty and pucca shops filled with foreign clothes, cigarettes, cosmetics, electronics were functional. At that time and it lasted well into mid nineties that people from Punjab come here for shopping. The new karkhano market as it is known today was almost non existent in early eighties. After commissioning in 1984 in an air defence regiment at Sargodha, one of our regiment 95 was here at Peshawar which included Capatin Rizwan, captain Javed to name, other regiment 13 Light was at Risalpur thus a ready flow of travelling. My own unit officer and my very close friend Captain Samee Khan was living in Peshawar thus I became close to it.

There used to be regular bus service between Sargodha and Peshawar via Khushab area. Bus used to

leave Peshawar at mid night and reaches Sargodha early in morning, once myself and Samee Khan along with Rizwan travelled on it. Through Samee Khan I came to know that there is prostitution in the city also. Tassadaq had plenty of such stories to narrate, I saw with my own eyes an officer hooking a girl and then having regular dates. Thus that image of piety was shaken. When I was posted here from Karachi I had long walks on beach with my friends and I highlighted what I am expecting here; I was mentally shaken how to start a married life in Peshawar. My wife who happens to be a air force family spent almost all her life here in Peshawar and Kohat without learning any Pashtu word was working in military hospital as doctor.

I remained here for two years and it was fantastic in all sense. My son was born here and spent couple on months before we were posted to Multan. I was impressed with Peshawar in many ways , first thee was never any fight among males, I saw university boys wearing sherwani and vacating seats for elders, girls beautiful and many tales were narrated about them by the bachelor officers of the squadron. One on the squadron officer was ahvinga rough time with a local girl and in the end the officer was given letter of thanks by the army. I have walked through the city at all odd times, I have watched porn and smoke hashish in the Bilours cinema, Peshawar in short was hub of all evil

vices, drugs, weapons, porn, smuggling , fake currency, stolen cars and so on; but there was no fear in the air . There was always a difficulty in finding a transport at odd hours, at night it seems as if the city just shuts up. There used to be regular traffic of foreigners at least till 1979, I saw them wandering on the city streets with pathan shop keepers high on hashish just staring at the white girls although clad in decent hippie wardrobe.

I next visited Peshawar

Mahsud Scouts

My first stop was at Mahsud scouts or the Khyber Agency. Irony is that none is familiar with Mahsud scouts, i have been hearing their name quite often from my friend Brigadier sardar who was pushing me to write the history of them but i was reluctant as in my opinion the corps is not old enough in reality i had very feeble knowledge about them. Living in Balahisar one gets into a routine and i came out of the inertia by opting to visit the closet corps Mahsud scouts. On Friday the vehicle came there was one officer major Imran who happened to be from Air defence keeping long ahir, we went together in the convoy comprising of two vehicles.

Karkhano Market at the edge of settled areas of Frontier capital Peshawar is a classic display and proof of how the tribes have been pacified. The area west of Peshawar after twenty miles is the area of Afridi tribe, this territory then extends for another thirty odd miles further west and encompasses Durand Line and more importantly the Khyber Pass that allows trans mountain ranges movement or between the Afghanistan and Pakistan. Area west of Peshawar is like a bowl with edge of bowl starting at twenty miles with mountain tentacles. Besai Ridge divides this western extremity into two halves, the area on the north of this half leads to the Khyber Pass through Jamrud however the other half of Besai ridge is known as Bara Valley and is the most commercial in the whole Durand Line or tribal area. In Bara valley lives the six clans out of eight clans of Afridi and even among them the Shalobar, Malik Din Khel are on the edge and as such have more control of the commerce, Kuki Khel controls the Khyber Pass at Landi Kotal .

This disparity of having trade opportunities among the clans can have variable outcomes, the less blessed tribes can resort to theft and robbery or they can be coaxed into joining the government jobs or they can be given lands to open their own markets and this is the way the tribal belt has been interfaced into the settled areas since 1849 when Punjab was annexed and

Peshawar already under the Sikh rule and governed by a French Governor attained the position of being the Frontier Town between the British India and Kingdom of Afghanistan. Peshawar then was a city of thieves and diseases apart from gardens. It had acute shortage of water for drinking other than the administration of Sikhs was well established with forward fort at Jamrud the eastern mouth of Khyber Pass, Hari Singh Nalwa had advanced ten miles further west at Ali Masjid the midpoint of the pass but was defeated and killed in field.

It took us not more than twenty minutes from Peshawar to reach the Fort Salop. The track sneaks out from the rear gate of the frontier corps establishment area at Hayatabad crosses a road and follows a track. There is now a wall surrounding the whole Hayatabad complex extending almost towards the Bara Bazar, it is like Berlin Wall in a sense as there exist two distinct cultures on both side of wall. The western end of the area beyond the wall is the Khyber Agency which has its Bara Tehsil here. On a broad spectrum the main road leading from Peshawar – Torkham-Kabul originates from this point, area on the south of the road is the Baar Tehsil which extends further south. Presently it is the hot bed of miscreant activities and my destination is this valley.

We passed in front of Shakas fort which is a new construction as it dates back to mid eighties and

practically road terminates here , ahead is a narrow pass and then road takes a dip and first habitation is contacted which is rather well built, solid house, thick growth of jungle trees none bearing fruit or grand in height but gives over all a green colour to the eyes. Town is like any normal town in Frontier, none was carrying weapons, children going or coming from school wearing white uniform which is a rare scene as all wear militia colour in school but it is probably a private school. We drove farther and these last few miles before the Fort Salop are the dangerous areas, many blast have taken place here so are ambushes. The track is narrow, dusty and sharp turns , it is rather flat and slightly elevated from the ground, visibility is reduced due to thick growth of bushes. The mental state in such moments is alarming, one expects a blast at any moment, a firing burst coming and hitting the vehicle has all the probability, nothing can be taken for granted. My heart beat accelerates , eyes searching for anything unusual, however i had no weapon with me and therefore all these were just basic instincts. The fort all of a sudden emerges out of nowhere; few shops outside which at some time not long ago were bustling with life now deserted. The sentry opened the gate and we entered inside. There is a sigh of relief which every one takes when ever thy reach back into the safety and comfort of the fort

Mahsud Scouts look after the south western approach towards Peshawar, it is part of Khyber Agency and its headquarters is at Fort Salop approximately twenty miles south west of Peshawar. MS {Mahsud Scouts} were raised on 9th August 1937 at Razmak as a 5th Mahsud Road Construction Battalion. These battalion were raised in mid thirties in Waziristan mainly to induct the native tribes into military there by creating goodwill by providing jobs. On the other hand certain tribes were not fully trusted to the extent to raise full fledged battalions; Mahsud Battalion was a road construction unit mainly and chiefly task for road construction.

Khajauri Campaign 1930 .

Fort Salop It is the home of Mahsud Scouts, they occupied it in 1961 but the fort has a history of its own. It was constructed in 1930 as a result of Khajauri Operations.

On 23rd April 1930, the British army opened fire on the Red Shirts in Qisa Khwani Bazar, Peshawar. Somehow, a rumour spread that three Afridis were also killed who had gone to Peshawar for receipt of their allowances. Frontier conflicts in majority of the cases are result of rumours and this was no exception.

A meeting of Afridis took place in Bagh Masjid Tirah, on 2nd May 1930 and it was decided to send a

lashkar to attack Peshawar. Two to seven thousand armed Afridis got collected in Khajuri Plain. They collected at Spin Kamar, Malakdin Khel and Kambar Khel were the chief movers. They started going towards Peshawar by 30 May in small parties along Bara River. On 5th June 1930, they contacted British forces on the Western outskirts of Peshawar cantonment, Fighting took place for four days and the lashkar was dispersed. Another Lashkar assembled on 05 August and attacked on 13th August 1930 and fighting with British forces continued for about six days resulting in loss of life and property. The British used artillery to disperse the tribesmen. By 20th August about 250 Afridis including 2 old women even reached Peshawar city. The Supply Depot in Cantonment was also attacked. Sir Edwin Pears, chief commissioner of Peshawar, recommended to the Government of the India that Tirah should be occupied¹.

The Afridis are a famous, large and powerful tribe, they live in the area called Tirah, which is about 900 square miles of hilly country, to their west is the Province of Ningrahar, and to their south lies Kurram Agency. The Afridis are divided into eight major clans: Adam Khel, Aka Khel, Kamar Khel, Kambar Khel, Kuki Khel, Malikdin Khel, Sipah and Zakha Khel. The major

¹ Nawaz Major, Frontier Guardian, Frontier Corps publication, 1994.

portion of the Afridi tribe lives on east of Durand Line, with the exception of a small portion of the Zakha Khels, who have their villages in Ningrahar Province across the mountain, through which the Durand Line is marked.

The Government of India formed a committee on 20th September 1930. In January 1931, the committee decided that occupation of Tirah would be unsound politically. As such, occupation of the Khajuri Plain only, was recommended, On 9th December 1931, final sanction was given. General Coleridge started the occupation operation immediately which lasted till 31st March 1931. Consequently roads were constructed on the Khajuri Plain. Some permanent military posts were also established at Fort Salop and other places. On 3rd October 1931, an agreement between the British and Afridis was signed at Jamrud and the British army action came to an end. Fort Salop was named after the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, the British unit which consolidated the area of Karawal etc. During the operation three Brigade size camps were established at Bara Fort, Karawal and Miri Khel. Commander-in-Chief India, Field Marshal Lord Birdwood, also visited troops at Bara Fort, A medal of North West Frontier Campaign 1930-31 was issued after the occupation of Khajuri plain.

The occupation of Khajuri initiated by British took a permanent shape and continued till to date

Fort Salop.

It is the home of Mahsud Scouts, they occupied it in 1961 but the fort has a history of its own. It was constructed in 1930 as a result of Khajauri Operations.

Fort Salop today is the headquarters of the Mahsud Scouts, Fort did not had any outer boundary wall, almost all the forts constructed in Khajauri Plains by the British did not had any outer boundary, it was in 2010 that Colonel Naseer Janjua the commandant initiated the project and completed within his tenure a remarkable feat indeed, it is worth mentioning that Colonel Janjua has a reputation of building walls around the Forts he did it at Boya where he was commanding a wing in Tochi Scouts. The present office block which stands majestically in the heart of the Fort Salopt was also completed by him.

Fort today covers an area of 10 acres with a twenty feet bricked wall all around having sentry towers at regular intervals, the water source is well, initially there was only one well but now two wells cater for the water requirement, there is electricity with generators as stand by. The complete construction of the fort which

excluding the main office block and new medical inspection room dates back to early days; it consist of tin roof huts and long elongated barracks, the roof is invariably painted in red colour. In last five years it has gone through major renovation which are still underway. The current project is to construct the bunkers for the troops and already three such bunkers have been completed by colonel Naeem Sarwar since taking over command in mid January 2013

Fort has a main gate which is a new one due to construction of wall, after a distance of 500 meters stands the old and original building, it had a wall which were removed or pulled down in post 1947. Inside the fort the troops residential area is on the east where as the office blocks stands in centre with officers mess and officers residence including commandant house adjacent. A central small park with a miniature lake, Birds cages adoring it.

On the outer perimeter the artillery, armour and signals occupy the main grounds with sentries posted on the posts round the clock. In recent years Fort has been receiving mortars from the Afridis on regular basis. There are six families of troops and three families of officers residing inside the fort.

It receives fresh ration on every Wednesday, pay is collected on the first of every month from Peshawar

and brought back to fort under heavy guard, pay day is a happy day. The area is generally level with a very gradual slope. There are few old trees still left despite almost eighty years of living, the two oldest trees flank the office block on south. By and large soil is tough , water shortage has not helped in putting forward an orchard worth mentioning and neither there is any crop however small kitchen gardens still add colour to the dinning tables of officers and other ranks. The lambs issued as part of fresh ration are a regular sight, they move in herd and spend the days nibbling on what ever grass is available.

Sheen Kamar

On Wednesday I went to Sheen Kamar which means *green* mountains, it was not planned to visit it not planned to visit today but then Major Imran informed me in the morning that the trip is planned . Myself and Captain Ehtisham along with an escort. The Fort Salop controls the route as it is constructed on the eastern descent of the Pass. This pass is as important as the Khyber Pass it is inhabited by the Zia Khel tribe of Afridis. We drove out , it was sunny and warm. The very first village outside the fort is deserted now. The original road used to pass along the boundary of the fort similar to Boya Fort in North Waziristan.

The road is a constant climb but it is gradual, on our right the branch of Bara River flows mostly dry with only a silver lining of water, the village of Besai is located on a high plateau with houses well spread, having plenty of tree. As one climbs up through winding road one comes across instances of it being blown up by the miscreants which in this case is Mangal Bagh.

Mangal Bagh is the war lord of the area couple of years ago he was a conductor on the Bar-Peshawar bus and according to the commandant has made money through selling of hashish.

After twenty odd minutes of drive the Sheen Kamar Pass is arrived, it is a narrow pass where in 2000 the project of constructing the road linking the area with Tirah was inaugurated and completed after two years. It is not a marvel of engineering feat but a mark of political acumen. The Afridi tribe is known for its commercial acumen and many a times the various factions have split among themselves chiefly on the issue of having more share in the trade. I met Lieutenant colonel Faisal of Swat Scouts, he was waiting with his junior commissioned officers at the pass. I feel bit embarrass in having being given this honour it speaks of the officers. Faisal has joined directly from Lahore where he was commanding the Guides cavalry. What a shock it must be to him to come from such an illustrious regiment to become part of Swat Scouts. He did not showed any

resentment. Very courteous and polite officer who seems to be learning the ropes of the area. We drove forward now the area on our left was open green wide valley and on our right it was a mountainous range. Soon we reached the turn from where one track leads to the right the old pass if one can call it. We pass through another village and reach the last post of Swat Scouts where two tanks were parked in awkward position. Tanks are being used here in direct firing role. Our next and last stop was the village defence committee post.

It looked like any Taliban post, there was one sentry carrying a Kalashnikov and standing tall and proud on a fortified bunker , another young man was giving the sentry duty in the cover of a olive tree and another one bit far looking at the approaches from tirah. There is only one way and that is the road through which vehicles can move although any one can come down from the adjoining hill which is on the right of the road. My interest in these men was to see how these natives fight and live, it is purely luck that these are now enemy of Managl Bagh whom they lovingly call Mangli. The only reason that these men have turned against him is due to the fact that Mangal is from Sepah tribe a sub caste of Afridi where as these men are from Zia Din Khel sub tribe of Afridi's. This is the art of frontier warfare and this is where the political agent comes in handy by dividing the tribes . these sub tribes are more

concerned about their own interests than looking after the ideological values of Managl Bagh.

. The interesting feature about these **village defence committee** is that they are the the true and classic militia which Machiavelli was so profoundly fond of and propagated. The English Militia of 17th Century is another example of these militia; the natives taking care of the town and villages against the miscreants. English militia was paid and fed upon public tax which was levied for the occasion and purpose. Here at **Sheen Kamar** pass these men of Zakha Khel tribe are fed by the Mahsud Scouts or the political agent indeed. The weapons or more precisely the ammunition is provided by the Mahsud Scouts on behalf of political agent; this is how the Frontier Corps took birth. The Turi Militia of Kurram Valley was the very first example among pathan otherwise Colonel Durand had raised Gilgit Scouts in 1889.

We bid them farewell after embracing each other which is the custom as well you cannot enter or leave a post without shaking or embracing each other it may be just touching but it has to be done. On our way back the valley was now on our right, in front the Bara Valley lush green. This greenery here is deceptive because these are not fruit trees rather shrubs, there is one particular shrub known as gurgoray which has small fruit and is eaten. This route connects Tirah with Bara valley and is

much pleasant than the Khyber Pass , its only limitation is its rather bit of extent as compare to Khyber which I have not seen yet.

There was an old grave yard next to Zaka Khel post across the track, I was narrated by one of the tribesman as being an old graveyard which was told to them by their grandfathers. We stopped by at one oasis like place to see the caves, after walking through the bushy track led by the Mahsud Scouts we entered the mouth of a cave and then I followed the others , it was dark and cool. The light of mobile phone was not enough to guide but I managed it and followed other , through a labyrinth of turns we all reach at the end which was a circular flat mud end. The height was good enough even for me to walk straight and erect. We made our exit through another way and suddenly found ourselves on a open patch with trees around. These caves are man made they re all around, they are in villages along the way. They were and are used to keep the animals insides in winter and also the humans. Their defensive value is beyond words to explain. In old times and still the tribes in time of war especially the women and children can take refugee here and so can the militia.

Tuesday.

I woke up at 0730 hours rather the waiter came to wake me up. The room where I am staying has an

attached room as well and the person came out of the room thus I was bit at loss whether he is an officer who is living next door or an attendant; it is difficult to judge when all are wearing kameez shalwar and that too early in the morning. It was a bright sunny day, I ordered a cup of tea which was not good somehow the other it is difficult to find a decent cup of tea everywhere. Major Imran who is performing the duty of DQ was my guide and we had to go to Fort Jhansi first and then to the Fort Miliward and back. It looks simple but last night I had a second thought on the whole trip. There is a cease fire with the Taliban and everyone seems to be bit relaxed but I am a firm believer and so are many others who regard these cease fires and agreements as a lull before the storm, none knows when the hell is going to break out but everyone consoles other with these words of peace.

I am still not very much clear about the direction of north, it is only after ascertaining the north that one can make a relationship between geography and history. We left the fort in a hilux with another hilux having our escort. In the vehicle I sat behind with Major Imran and o an ambush laid on us and the reaction of the scout; not a very good feeling. The main reason is the easy attitude of everyone here and secondly it seems almost impossible to stop an suicide attack or ambush, both rare in this area as compared to north Waziristan. We passed Shaaks Fort, area is green with plenty of shrubs 'keekar'

but not of plantation or crops. Initially the passage out from fort passes through a culvert, then burnt out and destroyed shops a sharp bend, another destroyed culvert and drive straight then comes the small town of Qambar Khel. It is not like a typical frontier town rather an urban outskirt of Peshawar. Wall chalking regarding the election{it is due today on NA 4 I believe} it has been postponed in the initial 11 May elections. The moment I saw few women clad in burqa walking in the stony causeway I felt relax. Their walking and presence outside is a n assuring sign of peace and modern enlightenment of the area. There were school boys all clad in white dress although in Frontier they wear militia colour; could be a private school. I am not wrong if I write that I have seen maximum wall chalking in FATA regarding the private schools. Males were sitting idle on the roadside probably waiting for polling but it could be custom or habit also, none was carrying any kind of arms

Fort Jhansi & Fort Milward

These two forts are other two major forts in the area, first one Is in fact Fort Shakas which is a rather new construction it was handed over to FC in 1982. Fort Jhansi comes first, its crow distance from Salop is not more than four kilometers but as the area is infested with mines/IED and ambush sites thus a long detour is forced upon. The road is now a track with often blown up

culverts and almost all houses are demolished partially or complete. The area around belongs to Malik Din Khel clan, they are more business like and have soft attitude towards the FC. For Jhansi one has to pass astride the road running parallel with Hayatabad but on one side is the settled area and other side is free tribal area.

Bara Bazar the hub of Mangal Bagh is now deserted like a ghost town , there are over 7500 shops in the two miles stretch of road all dealing with hashish and weapons. These markets have been occupied by the Khyber Wing of Khyber Rifles under command of Mahsud scouts. The shops have their wares intact, they have fabulous rooms upstairs with woodwork and carpets. From Bara we drove past Dogra which is a n army unit headquarters, the track is in dirt with bushes all around, needles to say that no defence against IED is possible in such terrain, other than jammers but you cannot do much about a pressure mine. At Dogra which used to be a Sikh outpost is now a complex of three factories owned by Haji Ayub Afridi who himself died couple of years ago.

Jhansi is on the bank of Bara River, an old post constructed in 1928, it looks after the area which is plain . There is no wall around the fort , there is a squadron of armour, battery of artillery and so on. Construction is all barracks and plenty of them are here. Two years ago it came under an fire attack from Mangal Bagh men. It have a beautiful Chinaar garden as well which was

constructed in 1980 by the wing commanders. All along there was noise of jets flying over head. Conversation revolves around the activities of the miscreants, morale high.

Fort Milward is the last of the forts on the southern edge of the valley, there are two more forts like Kishengarh but it is not under Frontier Corps. Milward had a worst scenario when nine scouts including the wing commander were killed in an ambush.

Fort Milward remained with FSF till 1976 then it was handed over to FC. Fort is not that big but it have open spaces with Bara River branch running on the southern edge, There are Kiker Trees all around with very little space for irrigation. I had a briefing at Milward and also the lunch. Most of buildings have been repaired and altered but still a vast number of original hutments. Families of troops six-ten lives in every fort and face the same music as the men are facing. Light is rare but there are generators and their use is quite liberal.

Khyber Rifles. August 2013.

If ever there is one name in Frontier Warfare which is not bounded by language, time, race and is understood all over the world then very rightly it is Khyber Pass and Khyber Rifles. It is 2100 hours and I am sitting in the Michni Guestroom which is located on

the upper storey of this 1960 era architecture {Deco} the original mess building which was constructed in 1900 is across the far end of the lawn it is now commandant's house. I came here in the morning from Peshawar with the commandant Khyber rifles Colonel Mansoor who has taken over a week ago, he was previously defence attaché at Uzbekistan. We started off at 0800 hours, I woke up at 0615 hours with great difficulty but managed to be in time, it is always good to start a venture on time. The driver with me Havildar Syed Ali Mahsud was a friendly person and we had a lively talk all through the way which took us over an hour due to under construction road being built by Frontier Works Organization{FWO}. The convoy comprised of five vehicles, one with me another with commandant and then two protection vehicles and then a civilian car carrying commandant's family. We raced out of Peshawar mainly because it was Friday and secondly it was early in the morning.

Like all Pakistanis' I have been brought up watching the Gateway to Khyber on television and currency notes, but never saw it before, name like Jamrud, Ali Masjid, Torkham are part of military history. They all are on the route. We passed Hayatabad, entered into the Khyber Agency the very first shops are of opium and weapons I enquired from the havildar and he replied that well the business is as usual but at very

low key. I have been a regular visitor here in 1992 but never had the opportunity , time or guts to travel ahead. In early 70s and even in 80s and 90s people used to visit Kabul on daily basis in early 60s the Pakistanis used to visit Kabul to watch Indian movies. Then came Jamrud fort which was built by the Sikh General Hari Singh Nalwa in 1836.

Khyber Rifles take their origin to the second Afghan War of 1879 when they were raised as Khyber Jazailchis with Major Nawab Aslam Khan as the first commandant. Khyber Pass itself came into limelight due to 1st Afghan War of 1839. The British East Indian troops did not march through it rather they opted for the Kandahar {Bolan Pass} but their retreat and relief was through Khyber Pass and that is how Khyber Pass and Khyber Rifles became synonym .

Khyber Pass is the most natural way of movement between the Kabul-Peshawar-Lahore-Delhi and onwards to Calcutta in east and towards the central asia on west. Pass itself starts almost ten miles west of Peshawar with Jamrud as the base town and then gradual climb with a swindling track{presently FWO is constructing road which is built till Ali Masjid}. Population is thin on both sides of road, barren void of water and generally dry. The present day road journey despite the under construction road does not take more than an hour. The ever present long Mercedes trailers

coming from Kabul carrying goods and military hardware of NATO, non custom paid vehicles, and many other vehicles keep it busy from sunrise to sunset. One obvious absence is that of motorcycles, I did not saw even a single motor cycle in today's journey and neither I saw any one carrying weapons. It is hard to belief that it is the same notorious Khyber Pass. Presence of women is a very handy yardstick to measure the civilization hold in the agency, they are rare sight in Upper Tochi Valley, here in Khyber they are obvious, I saw many of them waiting for the public transport sitting beside the road, I saw them moving in flock carrying water buckets, sitting in vans and so on yet all were covered in chaddar and not in shuttle cock burqa. That was heartening for me as these signs are evidence of pacification of people in the agency.

The famous railway line which was once termed as impossible to construct and which took decades of paper work and was finally made operational in 1922 is now in ruins, at places it is shredded and tottering in pieces.

Since 1836 when the Sikhs were defeated at Ali Masjid till now the landmarks all along the track have hardly altered with the exception of two, one the house or killa of Haji Ayub Afridi who was once rated as the most honest and hospitable drug smuggler of his time, he also had the distinction of firing a shot at Nehru during

his speech at Peshawar in 1946; Ayub was a khassadar then. Other is the Miri Mosque where a blast in 2009 killed over 92 tribesmen, mosque has been built new. The other landmark is Ali Masjid, the tradition goes that Hazrat Ali came here and built a mosque, opposite the mosque is a huge boulder believed to be thrown by Hazrat Ali; yet the population is entirely composed of Sunni faith.

I arrived at Landi Kotal after an hour of historic drive to enter into Khyber Rifles Mess another historic landmark, I have read and heard so much about it that I felt as if I have been here before, a large mess with open green lawn a rare sight here, it is double storied and decorated in style. The gallery of the mess is the most talk about in the world because no where else one finds such luminaries like Carter, Nixon, Thatcher, Raza Shah, Robert de Niro, Mahattir, King Hussein, Queen Elizabeth, Diana, Sachin Tendulkar, Quaid e Azam, to name few who have visited and presented their autograph photographs and shields. The variety of shields are a subject in themselves. Wooden, brass, plastic, crystal, paper, cloth, etching, engraving, and all that has been possible are here; these shields are from almost every country including North Korea, Zimbabwe, Jordan, Abu Dhabi, Glasgow Police, Defence Intelligence Agency, Canadian Mounted Police, Australian parliament, Swiss armed forces, France,

Portugal and even India. Probably the only mess in Pakistan where the shields presented by Indian defence attaches are placed prominently. It is a who is who of Pakistan military, General Zia Ul Haq { he served in Khyber Rifles as major in 1954} Generals Abdul Waheed Kakkar, Mussharraf, and Field Marshall Ayub Khan have graced this mess. These shields are an insight into the country's culture there are some who have taken the pain to engrave the presented to Khyber Rifles and others have simply presented by so and so. Many of the shields have lost their colour and shine and the insignias itself have lost their shape and even the screws have become loose. All in all over 1200 such shields adorn the long wall and two rooms of the mess. There are walls dedicated to single country, USA, UK are the leading visitors followed by Turkey. There are rare souvenirs also like the autographed bats of English and Indian cricket teams, the legend like Sachin Tendulkar is there smiling at Torkham Post so is Diana.

Outside is a tree which is in chains because a drunk British officer felt it moving one night in 1913 and ordered it to be chained and it is still chained, the new heritage complex which I have not seen today. Mess havildar took me out for a walk and we first went to the mess staff living quarters where I saw the dhobi ironing and talking on mobile simultaneously. The camp is huge , previously it had a outer mud wall as late as 1940 but it

is no more there. The water supply comes from Torkham through a pipe and is stored at Mirza piquet which is located on the northern side at a mile distance.

In the evening had a cup of tae in the mess lawn and enjoyed the company of two officers both major Major Raza and other I am forgetting his name. There was a lady get together at the mess and thus we also had the opportunity to enjoy the chicken, noodles and dehi balay followed by cup of tea. Talk range from importance of sports in army to the disadvantages of mobile phone. Issue of my own menu was also discussed and finally they agree to chalk it out themselves. In all the Frontier Corps messes there is no set menu rather it si what you would like to eat. I normally avoid meat in such circumstances where I don't have to pay the bill because it looks odd to order an expensive meal ; I also avoid using transport in such matters thus we chalked out a plan where I was given the freedom to walk around. Later I came to my room.

My room is spacious, large and huge just like a seventies film of Muhammad Ali, it is designed in a manner which creates nostalgia, I do not use air conditioner also when it si free. Later the commandant came for a courtesy call. He is from 25 Cavalry and has been a defence attaché in Uzbekistan for three years thus I had many questions to ask, how is the weather, how is economy, law and order, people, their religious

affiliations and above all their ferocity. Colonel Mansoor gave ample and satisfying replies. In nut shell Uzbekistan is an autocratic society where 90% population is Muslims yet religion is discourage, none is allowed to have prayer room in any factory or office, strict intelligence, almost one intelligence person on every three persons. No foreigner can move out of city without getting himself registered with police even locals also have to abide by these conditions. No one is allowed to keep weapon , eight years in jail for keeping one bullet. People are conservative wearing long dresses and no shorts in Ferghana Valley. Tashkent and Samarkand are the two most open cities with night life, no café can be opened unless it serves alcohol. Law and security is very strict and even a nude girl can walk safely back to her apartment at night. Parallel economy of corruption is there; by and large Uzbeks are stiff neck people. Amu Darya is the main river, country is plain in nature with fifth largest cotton growing country. Fruits are proverbial in taste especially the watermelons, Tamerlane is the national hero and his statues are everywhere, one president is in power since 1991.

And sure I thought about you all the way from Peshawar to Landi Kotal, now it is warm here in the room , so good nite.

Day Two.

Got up late because all night sleep was far away, excitement, nostalgia and above all fear of unknown. Anyway the first issue was the shower, it is modern gadget and despite all my efforts I failed to understand its function thus filled a bucket with tap water and took a shower and made a mental note to find its operation from the sweeper. Had a cup of tea and a toast in breakfast and then moved down had a round of cultural building, a sheer wastage of money but then keeping in view the number of foreign delegation may be it is required but nothing extraordinary perhaps it looks to me that way. Sat in lawn just staring at the far end , a lush green lawn with birds running around, there are a dosen cranes here and they all move together. A fat cock was running after the hens too. Day was warm and it was pleasant to sit in shade. The vehicle came to my disappointment driver was a Mullagori tribe but he picked three more escort guards including Subedar Sana Khattak and we moved out towards the first destination a water reservoir piquet.

Drive was interesting, it was school closing time and students all male were wearing blue shalwar kameez instead of militia colour, quite a number of trucks {14000-17000 vehicles move daily across this border}. I saw a local grave yard the way it is different from normal is in the afct that natives erecta large flat stone at times two on grave thus it gives an odd but not frightening picture, there are many graveyards and they

are nestled in between the houses. Shops were open and people moving in normal manner none was carrying any weapons, driver informed me that now it is forbidden and only those are allowed to carry arms who have any vendetta around them. Passing through the mud habitat having a paved road we headed towards the piquet which is at a higher elevation having barbed wire all around it, a deserted pond in front. The guard commander Havildar Sadiq Yousafzai welcomed me and in Pashtu told a sepoy to fetch a cold drink but I do understand the language now thus I asked for only a glass of local water which he reluctantly brought. View is good, all around I saw mud and plaster houses and I was informed that this area belongs to Shinwari tribe and they have three sub clans who live here apart from Afghans. The house are at low level thus I could see what is going on inside, woman cooking , children running but overall void of life. In Waziristan it could have sparked a war had this kind of piquet been there as it happened in 2011 but here piquet is old and houses are new thus morally the militia has an upper hand. By this time I was convinced that area is peaceful in nature.

Went inside the piquet , it has cemented staircase for entrance otherwise all around a solid block of bricks, only four men were inside, they had two charpoys outside as well with a radio. Electricity is only for an hour everyday, cooking is done by the piquet with fresh

ration coming daily, I saw a goat moving around and recalled the standing orders of Tochi Scouts of 1922 which forbids goats at piquet mainly for bestiality.

British established the present camp in 1899 and by 1910 had constructed the piquet covering all sides of the camp at higher elevation. All in all there are four such piquets and post, the difference between post and piquet is in size, post have more capacity of troops. After an hour we move back. The deserted water reservoir was once brimmed with water and source of life, water is scarce here, I did not realized it in mess but here life revolves around water. The source is at ten miles away near the Pak-Afghan border .

Return journey was more comfortable and knowledgeable, saw a shop having the name Israel sabzi shop, not much of people on road, saw sign posting of lady doctors clinics, coaching centres, petrol pumps and so on. We move from east towards the northern side towards a piquet known as Mirza Post, the driver temporarily lost the way and while we were reversing I saw two women walking and they tried to cover their face when they saw us but there was no urgency in them. Mirza post is not the original name but I will trace it soon. The post looks magnificent work of defence , it dominates the area, it is on higher elevation , much bigger in size can hold over 100 soldiers for a fortnight, absolutely covered with only firing slits visible like poke

marks on a cheese slab. The post commander initially took me around this solid block of stone. The Shinwari tribe is the neighbor at low elevation. There are no stair cases rather a iron ladder which can be pulled up too. Inside I came to know that it has three tiers, the lowest level then the one which I climbed and another one at upper which can be reached through a wooden broad staircase with steep angle. At the top one half of roof is covered and other half is open to let the sun rays come in. At all corners at all tiers less the base are solid iron protruding boxes with firing slits, I later climbed to the roof as well which is connected with a bamboo ladder it is difficult to climb. The view from top vibrantly a refreshing one , one can se all around, the road junction, the camp, the village around, the communication towers at far mountains. Later I came down and accepted the offer of green tea 'Shilmanni' it is a local speciality , the herb is found in Shilmani tribe area. The post commander further increased my knowledge of how to make the green tea, first boil the water, then add sugar and then few herbs of Shilman. The cost of herb is at present about 400 Rupees per kilogram.

Down below is the water reservoir with two colours on the roof, one is meant for local population and other for the militia, the reservoir is divided from inside with a wall. We went down to the basement also and appreciated the construction and design of post. It is

mud brick from inside outside the stones have been used, floor are made of wood so is the roof with steel girders in between, I tried to find out the company who made it, normally TATA were the main suppliers of iron, there girders have been used at Thal Fort also but I could not find the name of manufacturer. There is very little electricity no connection from camp, water for post also comes on a bowser and on my inquiry that why don't you use electric motor to suck water the answer was vague in nature. One good thing about soldiers of FC is that they do not crib against the superiors. Post commander was hopeful that he will get it done once the new commandant comes here on his visit. The water bowser cost locals around Rupees fifty which is quite heavy on them. I pondered over the fact that in last thirteen years no such piquet or post has been constructed by army or FC, strange but it is true that many post like Isha have been repeatedly targeted by terrorist but they were never constructed on such quality. Thus the losses in war are not unavoidable rather the inefficiency of military is also responsible for them. The post meant to have hundred troops had only six, they cook at their own , there was no sweeper at the post, the cooking area was dirty and over all post needs a patron , regular visits of officers especially commandant are must. This post is in original condition as they have not constructed a cement stairs for ease.

Drive back , driver asked me whether I would like to see the Landi Kotal bazaar, I agreed if it is in rules and protection is sufficient, he smiled and said the area is peaceful. We drove into bazaar, on the way I saw militia giving route protection , on inquiry I was informed that they are for the safety of NATO containers, I noticed the absence of khassads{tribal police} and driver guessed that may be it is Saturday and they are on holidays, but I did noticed them while we were coming towards the post. Bazaar all belongs to Shinwari. Taxis, shops of all kind less arms or they were not visible, petrol pump, publicity hoardings of mobile companies, hotels, fruit shops , one odd bakery, no beggars and no music in air. It looks too peaceful and commercial, more like Dir. Saw the old railway station and railway colony, the train service has been terminated after the floods of 2005 which swept away the tracks near Ali Masjid.

Later had a drive around the camp, saw a group of women and children most unusual sign and driver promptly told me that they are Christians mostly sweepers , in Tochi even these dare not venture out in such outfits. Paid a homage to the martyrs monument of 7 Division, there is a brigade of army here as well but at the moment all its battalions less one is on deployment in different parts of the area. It is again unusual for a militia to have a regular army unit living beside it. The camp

does not have a solid wall what they have cannot be called an effective wall. This is why I mentioned earlier that cultural heritage building is wastage of money; wall is more important. Only Mahsud scouts have constructed a wall in these years, Colonel Janjua stands out among all commandants of Frontier Corps for his this deed . I talked about him with driver and he also agreed about Colonel Janjua because he had been at Fort Salop.

In the evening there was a dinner for a visiting officer , there was a lunch for another senior officer , I was invited but I tactfully avoided it but now I had the meal, a lavish one but settled for the platter and then nap of an hour. In the evening when I had a look at the mess lawn I saw sofas and tables with lights , surely a party but why and for whom , I soon found out that it for visiting brigadier of engineers, I was invited and I accepted it. The dance party or cultural troupe of frontier Corps has performed at White house also. Major General Ghayoor has mentioned about the mahsud dance party and their unique style of dance. They all have long hair, fancy dresses and when they started off it was thrilling, each tribes dance party acme one at a time, Mahsud were the first , comprising of thirty odd scouts, all having long hair. Mahsud dance is certainly very manly, the beat is heavy and no feminine shrilling voice or music of flute just drums and they move their heads as if they are going for a war, all of a sudden one dancer starts whirling

around the lawn in a circle at a breath taking speed. Mohmand were the next they had a flute, then Chitralis, they are soft in nature their dance is more like two peacocks having a date, it is flute oriented. In the end the Khattak with their swords thrilled the ten odd guests including myself and four hosts.

I met the old mess waiter Gul Anar he has been serving the mess for last forty five years now his son Owais is also working in the mess, another cook Aarsal { I think } had died last year he served Khyber rifles for well over sixty years.

Dinner in the open, mostly Bar BQ , fruit salad, rice, mutton, fish, qorma{ I avoided it} conversation ranging mostly about education, Aitcheson College, university and so on. Later a good ice cream{not hand made} followed by green tea and another hour of military gossips in which I was the silent occupant. The lights went out for ten minutes and in this I saw the moon which was veiled between the leaves of high tall pine trees, what a view.

In the end needless to say that day started with your thoughts and ending in same manner.

Day Four. Torkham

I had no intention or plan of going anywhere today, I slept with an vow to get up early thus to join the Rifles in their daily chores. I was able to manage that and started typing the data, then came the Hasan Kuki Khel Afridi to my room , he is a young lad who is the photographer of the Rifles. I had given him the History of tochi scouts book to show around the scouts in order to tell them and motivate them to have good photographs; mission as accomplished as Hasan told me that he has taken few pictures of the medical platoon. The good news was that commandant has gone to Peshawar, although Colonel Mansoor is an excellent officer yet the aura of Commandant is very forceful and I naturally felt bit relax.

After shower I went down, oh, I had a cup of tea and single toast in breakfast. At lawn I met the mess havildar and I took his picture he requested that he wants his picture to be taken with the sun dial , I did as he desired. I walked towards the office block which is in fact just across the western wall of the mess separated by an iron old red gate. From the design pattern it looks that initially only the walled compound was there and this mess building came up later probably in post 1945 era. Saw scouts working on an house which happens to DQ's house. In the office area I met the adjutant major Naveed , a good mannered officer and soon it revealed that he is

from Air defence 142 Gun missile regiment. Now this unit is known as Karma wali and it was arised by Lt col Ilyas who was my commanding officer also. Thus all ice broken and we were comfortable, colonel Mansoor had already given the instructions to all that all possible help is to be extended; so different from Chitral where commandant had no time for me even for a courtesy call. We talked about colonel ilyas , his son is now commissioned in same regiment. Major naved gave me a briefing on map explaining the deployment and the operations conducted so far. Names like Lalpura and Dakka are so familiar to my eyes and mind , I am keen to see the northern end of this ridge line where it debouches into the River Kabul some twenty miles from landi Kotal towards north. My anxiety and apprehension is as to know whether the river banks can afford caravan movement , it seems affirmative but I still want to see it myself. If it is true then the question arises that why should any one use this curving , hard , barren and ferocious route of Khyber Pass why not the easy path of following river Kabul, but it will take time. Major naved further enhanced my interest by offering me to go to Tirah Valley the heart of afghans, it takes three hours and route is absolute safe. Four months ago it was not the case and all troops had to be sustained by helicopters. Initially an army brigade was deployed there but it was pulled out in 2009 and Managil Bagh then established himself. Thus an operation was conducted in

which Major Naveed also took apart to clear them. On the very first day 3 Commando Battalion suffered over a dozen casualties same was the fate of 8 Punjab Regiment but valiantly they cleared the area and established the writ of state there. Zakka Khel a sub clan of Afridi played an important role in it. They had a fall out with Managla Bagh and thus joined the state's forces { Mizh Mahsud visit notes}. Zakka Khel was never the favoured clan of government since last one hundred years and they were not even enrolled in Khyber rifles but things have changed now. Zakka Khel now mans the piquets enroute and it is safe. In the conversation he asked me whether I would like to go to Chahar Bagh, I was stunned at this offer, Chahr bagh another historical place, furthermore he informed me that I can also see Michni and Torkham in the same trip as both are controlled by the No.5 wing located at Chahar Bagh, I grabbed the offer and he ordered the vehicle and escort to be ready.

We talked about regimental history, soon Major Raza also joins in, he was still keen on my yesterday's point about the lone scribe- Jurat of Khyber rifles and sheer absence of his name anywhere in Khyber rifles area. The irony with Khyber Rifles is that all their attention is focused on the officer mess and the flow of foreign dignitaries thus other aspects are bound to be overlooked.

Yesteday I had awak in the evening with the commandants orderly and wenta round the complete area, it becomes obvious when you see artillery shells lying under an open shed, one single rocket can cause astastrophic end results, the neglected garden in front of the regimental hospital where in good timea fountain was also installed but now the grass is uncut and in shabby conditions, the pathetic looking graveyard in the western corner which I was very interested to havea look, I saw only one garve with a epitah that was amajor's daughter who died in 1979 age just three months.I naslo ahda round of the canteen and canteen contractor is quite old, canteen was neat and clean.

Anyway coming abck to the main topic, we moved out at 1200 hours and sped pass the town , I had the Hassan photographer with me and he proved to be of great assistance. The Pass starts desending and we after ten minutes reached a cross junction from where we took a right turn for Chahar Bagh. Being in Militia vehicle with guard gives you immense advantage , you can take shoots of the area, you are not stuck in any traffic jam , which occurs due to heavy long vehicles movement going and coming from Torkham. There ate two lanes on pass now, one is used by the trucks and other for light vehicles, even Landi kotal has a by pass. The No.5 wing deployed at Chahr Bagh is being commanded by Lt Col Mushtaq of 36 FF. The road to Chahr bagh is narrow but

in good condition, I saw school boys wearing orange colour uniform which is very obvious , it seems that militia colour is not worn here in schools, other reason is that they are studying in private school that is why other day I saw student in light blue colour uniform. I saw even girls going to school which is very unusual but by now I have a conviction that Landi Kotal is much more liberal than any other Patahn town astride Durand Line, other logic is that they all belong to Shinwari Tribe which by these proofs seems to be liberal.

Chahr bagh is the most fertile area, infact it supplies water to the Landi Kotal as well. I saw a field of corn , the very first such field in days, air pleasant, scenery refreshing with fear lifting with every second and confidence level rising no more fear of IEDs or ambush. After another ten minutes drive we were at Chahr bagh , a fort constructed in 1926, a solid piece of stone with a small gate which hardly allows a small vehicle to pass through, inside a small courtyard with double storeyed building . The wing commander was there receiving me, the very first instant we met with each other, he took me upstairs , wooden stairs , yellow and red colour used freely, it is the wing colour. There was no electricity but it was pleasant. I knew from Major Naveed that Lt Col Mushtaq is preparing for his master's exam in international affairs with paper due tomorrow, I noticed the red stripe on his right chest

which indicates serious injury sustained in an operations. It certainly demands respect and I was not lacking in this manner. Our conversation was polite mostly on studies and general pattern of life. I inquired about him regarding the area, culture, environment. Lt Col Mushtaq happens to be student and later unit officer of my course mate Brigadier Naveed safdar.

Area is peaceful with Shinawari tribe in majority, no crimes in the area. The main issue is the responsibility of Torkham border checkpoint for which Mushtaq is wholly responsible certainly with commandant looking upon. He quoted an interesting incident where the Afghan national army (ANA) beaten the sweeper of the wing on which Mushtaq demanded an apology which was refused by the Afghans and in retaliation he just closed the border. The closing of border is an international issue but commandant stood behind Mushtaq and after a day the Afghans did offer an apology, in another incident over twenty Pakistanis were beaten by the Afghans inside their territory even when they showed their passport, Afghans simply torn these and threw in river and telling them to find them back at Attock. Again border was closed and it resulted in a flag meeting after three days, with an apology the border was open again. I asked him about how jirga is convened and how it is conducted. His reply was that basically the maliks who are nominated by the political

agent with as many four or five in one village, if any thing of interest or grievance take place then the maliks do send message, Mushtaq understands their financial aspect as in his words ‘ not many amliks can even afford the afre to come to his haedquartes’ thus he goes around, in other cases it can be a convening order from his side also. In the jirga almost all amlis attend alongwith any one else who awnts to be thee, normally they sit around, or if they come to his office than chairs are offeed. Normally either the elder malik stars proceeding or Mushatq himself will open up highlighting the reason for the jirga. In one instance the comapklint was from shilman tribe as they have been suffering from the ban on the asle of fertilizers as theya re used in explosives also. Mushatq resolved the matter by offering them one bag per farmer provided he brings a affi advit from the malik that this will not be used for any miscreant purpose. Mushatq highlighted his point by stating that despite the braek down of railway theracks are still intact and not stolen because of these high moral mgrounds of keeping the words. Mushatq had nothing but contempt for the afghans his words or feelings are the asme which Britsih also had regarding these afghans in their time, thieves, liars and so on. I think majority of the atrits attributed negatively about afridis are infact due to Afghans character and doing.

Meanwhile he informed me and requested to put on the arnks of promotion to two newly scouts, one havildar to naib subedar and other getting second pip . I was really thrilled and honoured but politely declined his offer, he told me that it is ok as afr as the tradition goes because in many cases the realtives of the promoted scouts come and put on the arnks. I recalled that in tochi one of the malik was putting on capatin's arnk to an officer there fore in nodded in approval. Hassan meanwhile aws busy in atking the pictures , tea braek aws ordered but it was atking time, I do not want to waste his time thus I really ahd to put my foot down that Mushtaq will not accompany me to the torkahm border and he will study ; he reluctantly agreed. While they were busy in group photograph which took place down satirs at the flag hoisting area which was where our vehicles wee parked; I had a round of the roof atking pictures and having an orientation of the fort and the area.

Tea braek came in layes , all kind of meat dishes, mutton tikka , mutton chops, chicke, kebabs, chips, and so on. Then we move down and ina ngarceful ceremony put on the arnks turn by tirn to the two scouts. It si ceatinly a agreat honour for me and a mile stone in the life of these, I could feel that Mushtaq is particulary not ahppy with naib subeadr's promotion and told him so that it is baecuse of my presence that he is getting ranks

otherwise he might have to wait for another week. There were no less than a dozen garlands wrapped around havildar ... and only one was put around the naib subedar. We bid adieu to him, Lt col Mushatq had already passed the instructions at Michni for my reception. We adopted the same route and soon joined the main road. After another few minutes of drive we were at Michni Post.

Michni post without any debate is the most famous post in the world {at time Check point Charlie was famous}, it is historical in a sense that it was constructed back in 1900, renovated last year and every head of state who visits Pakistan is invariably brought here, delegations, come here, it is a old piquet which has been renovated with new outer look. The subedar incharge there tried to take me to the briefing room which has a glass front panel with directions . I just walk into the piquet as in Mirza Post, it is similar in size and design , inside wooden floor, thick walls, white in colour, feeble sun light, wooden stairs leading to upper deck. It was as if I am in my own regiment and not a visitor. The scouts were definitely having a relaxed time , wearing their casual dress but I put them at ease and climbed up with these two hosts and Hassan. View from top was good , one can see all around. On the western side the Torkham was visible through a haze and cloud of mild dust kicked by the trucks. The pass itself takes a

turn here {pass has over 150 turns}, down below me was a khassadr check post, every truck is stopped here and money is taken by khassadrs. It should not be taken as bribe rather these khassadrs here comprised of three tribes, Shinwari, Shilmani, Afridi and even Mullagori. There is no toll tax on Khyber pass, one can leave his vehicle for even a week on any part of the pass and it will remain safe that is the duty of khassadrs to keep peace in the area. Thus the money which they take from the trucks finance their own existence but more important it helps the tribe to build its financial resources which comes handy when a tribe has to pay a collective fine. I am reading about them, watching them in almost all part of the frontier and not even once in a year and half of travelling I have found them ineffective or lacking courtesy. The windows of the vehicle have dark shades even then a khassadr knows that an officer is travelling and he always invariably waves hand in respect or salute.

Tamerlane's prison, a historical fallacy, in front of Michni Post down in the small gorge and up on a small hillock are two walls and a structure which has been termed as tamerlane's prison dating back to 13th century AD, before seeing it I was of the same opinion and thought of seeing it once, however after seeing it I am of the firm opinion that it is a historical fallacy, it is too new in construction and above all why should tamerlan require a prison, he was not of the type

and temperamenet to have such kind of institutions. The building wuld have atken at least half a year to construct and by this time Tamerlane was out of India after massacring one hundred thousand Hindus in one night as per his own autobiography so why should he requires . Furthermore there are no other building of same design or pattern attributed to him, logically one should find more of them at least at Landi kotal but there are none. I am now questioning all that has been written about frontier after this. One key issue is that no one has come here for a duration to saty majority comes and leaves after an hour { I did the same} thus lot of common folk has become authentic part of history. It was not Tamerlane rather Prince Timur son of Shah Shuja the king of Afghanistan who was deposed and it was in 1839 that he was escorted by Capatin Wade of British raj to Kabul.

We left the Michni, waved to the khassadrs and move towards the Torkham, the road here really is nothing more than a track of dust, the mountain itself are soft and there wasa cloud of dust kicked by heavy trucks but driver drove fearlessly, everyone leaves the way for the militia vehicle. On the left down below the scenery is different with green oasis with little trickle of water with the prison structure on the ridge that divides the water channel. Another few turns and we were on the palin ground heading for torkham , one has heard of fisah

market but here it is truck market, all around heavy trucks with occasional sedans, on my inquiry that these have regular number plates I was informed that these are private atxis which ply between the torkham and Peshawar. Reason for my inquisite was the occasional glimpse of women inside the cars with partial veil; mystery was solved at Torkham.

The road opens up soon and there was a traffic jam mainly due to trucks yet the Khassadrs kept some kind of discipline better than many traffic warden of many cities. These khassadrs just cleared the road for us, there is a taxi stand, some shops, custom post..typical border post, people must walking , rush, noise, heat, dust, airconditioner was on in the vehicle , it also had a tinted shade but I do wave at the khassadrs which they very fondly replied, the NATO vehicles onboard a trailer was too close to our small vehicle but we managed and finally entered the compound of our own.

Very unusual arrangement here at border, our complex is open, neat, well organized and well maintained, a monument without any inscription stood in centre with well painted slogans on all sides. The layout is that originally the Durand Line was straight at least here, it is a kind of narrow pass, with high ridge on south who has a water shed in the centre and that is the dividing line, however on ground the border has changed since Durand. In 1962 probably Pakistan & Afghanistan

made a barter of land, Pakistan got area a mile inside Afghanistan at Torkham and Afghanistan got one post near Arandu in Chitral. Here on Afghan side there is no water and it is given by Pakistan, the pakisatni post at Torkham which now protrudes into Afghanistan is known as Ayub post after FM Ayub Khan the president of pakisatn at that time. It is so unusual, from our compound a stair leads towards the west around the compound, with an iron grill around it, as you climb up the stairs the area on left is all Afghanistan, thus the zero line remains there and yet you are moving into the afghan territory in a curved manner and after a kilometer the Ayub Post is reached which is perched at the end of the ridge, I did not went to the the p[ost but appreciated the efforts of our leaders who got it. I had a full view of the afghan territory, a board showing karzai, daud and zahir shah was there, a well painted fort was aalso visible, a flag of afgahinstan aw fluttering. It is crowdy.

Border itself is nothing more than a chain which is arised at 2000 hours and down at 0600, the Afghna national Army troops waring fatigue were manning there side, for pedestrians thee isn a side walk and everyone in checked by them and so is the case on our side where Khyber rifles do the same. I did not saw any lady police to search the women they are generally allowed to pass by with just a visual scan. There are old trolleys pushed by hand with a capacity of two or three adults in it, it is

being used as taxi for crossing of border for sick and women. Women coming from Afghanistan are generally more liberal in looks, I could see the eyes and faces, even one was not having any veil just a chaddar wrapped around her. There were two who were wearing shuttle cock burqa of light blue colour . There are professional women also who usually ply for smuggling but this is when the khassads comes into force they exactly know who has what intention. I was taking pictures but I came to know that afghans do not like their pictures being taken; everyone hates media. I was the odd man out with my dress but with FC I was giving the impression of an high official of Pakistan and it feels good. I sat with the khassads , had a picture taken of them , and after some time we came back inside the compound. The habitat on the high ridge line is known as Killay and it has a history and story, General Zia has served in khajyber rifles in 1954 , his handiwal a Shinwari approached him when Zia became president and asked for electricity for his village , Zia not only provided electricity but also extended the road up to his village. The Afghan side does not even have electricity rather they are on solar power, we are getting electricity from Peshawar through grid stations at Jamrud.

Had a lunch, subedar gave me some grapes in abag and then after few pictures and lively talk we headed back through the same haze of traffic. Lot of

trucks were standing for their turn of custom clearance, there are many cafes , for accommodation there are no hotels rather there are holes or caves in the adjoining hills which almost touches outer periphery of the Torkham, they are cold in summer thus drivers wait here. People come from Jalaabad which is seventy odd kilometers away, Kabul is further 250 kilometers thus many Afghans prefer to have work, medical at Peshawar rather than at Kabul, thus a majority of them travel in private taxis from Torkham to Peshawar. Return journey was again interesting taking pictures and observing the railway tracks. Torkham is not more than ten miles away from Landi Kotal . On reaching Landi Kotal we stopped briefly at Landi Kotal railway station, for taking pictures I remained inside the vehicle and Hassan did the work. Soon khasasdrs came in , this is their beauty they reach the spot in minutes and invited us to tea but we just had a hand shake. There is a huge , large medical complex under construction at Landi Kotal , opposite the railway tracks work was going on, I saw board of lady doctors displayed on road as well.

Day Five.

Same pattern but today I spent the day in the offices, sat with adjutant Major Nauman, Major Raza had gone to Peshawar alongwith the photographer

Hassan. I was sitting in the adjutant office when I observed outside a group of men , I initially thought that they are from Mehsud drama party but they turned out to be rael. These wee Zakkha Khel tribesmen keeping long hair and wearing the chitrali cap a typical Taliban dress, adjutant went out side and had friendly talk with them , he ordered the tae bar to be opened for them and went to onform the commandant, I remain seated thee and soon all these Zakkha Khel entered the office, they wee atken abck by my dress{trouser/safari shirt} and presence I rose and shook hands with them and they replied with little bewilderment. I know that they are feeling tat I ama ian intelligence operator. I then left the office mainly because it ahd three chairs .

Day Six.

Much ado nothing, went to office area, had cup of tea with adjutant and other officers , also had a chat with the subedar major, naib subedar Musa Khan Mehsud. Spent time in intelligence section going through the maps, commandant is still in Jarobi. Had a cll from the Hussain Kuki Khel he is taking the pictures there. In the evening saw cricket match , Pakistan won it comfortably. In the evening I was invited on a barra khanna, in honour of Naib subedar Musa Khan, he is retiring I came to know almost at the end. I hada good chat with Musa talking about various haedgears of tribes the colours of turbans, and so on. Musa was not wearing

the Mehsud 's cap, I think even here the tribes are shy of wearing their own cultural dress but they certainly appreciate a talk on them. Oh yes since I had gone early there I had a round of station library , it was deserted but have good books, one good thing is that the local school students have regular periods here at library, otherwise I think it must have been years before any one drew a book. It is same here at Khyber Rifles too the mess library had no book issued in last four years and even the keys have been lost of shelves; they have to break the locks for me.

Dinner was ok , lot of mutton but not cooked properly, the issue with mutton or lamb is that it has to be served hot especially the lamb otherwise it is difficult to eat, I still remember Lt col tariq's bar b q at Tochi last eid it was the best I had in years, mainly because we all were sitting feet from the source and lamb fat is always good in winter. After dinner Lt Col Ijaz made a good speech in urdu , a good speech is a rare thing , selection of words and so on. The issue with majority of Punjabi officers is their lack of appreciation for the tribal customs, I now believe that three junior commissioned officers should be treated with same courtesy in their mess as we do for officers. I can feel that these JCOs feel uncomfortable on any jokes cut in front of other qaums. Major raza is a hard working and very courteous officer the most courteous one if I can add. The billiard room is

undergoing renovation the expets have been brought from Peshawar for this purpose and they work till mid night so do i.

One joke which I would to add' major general Fazl Ghafoor late, once aws attending the darbar and on reaching the rostrum after the Moulvi has done the recitation , he asked the scouts present, can you hear me, and everyone replied in affirmative, and general replied ' magar Moulvi saab ki tu phatt rahi thi'.

Last night I went through the visitors book and found the remarks of very first two pilots of RAF who landed at Landi KOtal in 1918, then that of Younghusband, Ross Keppel, Mountbatton and Mr Jinnah alongwith Liaqat Ali khan. In another it was Bhutto, Fazl Ilahi choudhary, Margret thatcher but the best one is the page having President Zia's signature and that of a cadet GC Tariq of 64 long course on same page.

On 1st March 1946 the Khyber rifles were raised at Sialkot by disbanding the Afridi battalions , ' the parade was conducted and there were two set of tables , the soldiers of Afridi battalion marched forward handed over their discharge papers and step back..made a salute and marched six steps forward to another atble and picked his new papers of being enrolled in the Khyber Rifles'. On that day 1243 men were a enrolled and all were Afridi. Their average height was 5.8 inches having

a chest expansion of 32 inches-34 inches. Further more six hundred new recruits were also enrolled and another two hundred were inducted from the frontier Constabulary Tochi scouts, south Waziristan scouts. The very first commandant was Lieutenant Colonel J.R. Booth DS and Subedar major Hamesh Gul Malik Din Afridi had the honour to be the first SM of the Khyber rifles; he had a short tenure and went on pension in October 1946 with an exemplary character. Other native officers as they were known included subedar Awaz Gul also MDK he went on pension in 1953, subedar Alim Khan again a MDK of Zangi village he retired in 1948. Subedar Major Azim Khan was then the next SM at Bakka Khel he retired in 1961.

Second enrollment took place on 8th April 1946 in which men from other scout corps were also inducted they vary from Hayat Gul Kuki Khel he was just eighteen years of age he went on pension in 1952. Ramzan was also a Kuki Khel from Sperai Village he was recommended by his malik Safdar Khan. Zamfir was also in his teens just being seventeen he served for another seven years before retiring in 1950. Misam Khan son of Alam Shah a Kuki Khel was also seventeen and he soon deserted in 1948 with a rifle. All in all 1762 men were enrolled in Khyber rifles by the end of 1946. The procedure of enrollment was the same as in other Frontier corps one has to bring the surety of his malik for

enrollment. Overwhelmingly all belong to Afridi or from Khyber. Saida Khan Shinwari was the very first from shnwari qaum to be enrolled on 21st November 1946 he later on rose to the rank of subedar major before retiring with an exemplary character in 1960. Sepoy Khial muhamamd was from Zakka Khel tribe he had the cregimenatl number of 1753, Sepoy member kahn was from aka Khel, Mirza Beg from Sipah, Sepoy sadozai wasa Kuki Khel, Sepoy Mashan Khan wasa Mullagori, and son were Sepoy amir Khan, dre Khan, babur Khan and Dabar Gul, these Mullagoris were all having an average age of over 25 years where as the Afridis were in the bracket of 17-19. Mullagoris were in the average height of 5.5-5.7 inches. Sepoy siraj din was from Saghiri Khatatk class he was the eldest having a age of 30 years. Sepoy umra Khan from Qambar Khel was seventeen at the time of enrollment. Almost all from Khyber agency area with exception such like sepoy said Hussain who was from paarchinar, he was Duparzai, these sepoys were enrolled into the companies with a clan composition for instance Mullagoris were in 3/12 company which means that the 12th platoon of 3rd company was composed of Mullagori, qambar khel were in the first company, duparzai in headquarters company, Zakka Khel also had the second company for enrollment, Sepoy Gul Khamin Shilmani from yangi village wasa mere 15 years old, he went on to serve till 1957. There were Yousafzai also but these were mostly

old veterans who were put in the headquarters company like Havildar Muhammad Yousaf Yousafzai, he was 44 years of age. For special trades like armourer and blacksmith the Punjabi Muslims were also enrolled like Armourer Muhammad Sadiq he belonged to Akhnur. Shinwaris, Mullagori and Shilman had the average age of under seventeen at enrollment and major reasons that they were not previously enrolled in the Afridi battalions and under the new arising they got the opportunity thus they all were young blood. These young lads did serve for seven years when majority of them got discharged with good character certificates. On the eve of independence the strength was 1838 sepoy.

There were two wings having eight companies and a headquarters wing. No 1 wing was being commanded by Major J. Letts. It was a blend of youth and experience. One key factor in enrollment and stay in Khyber rifle was the assessment of character in case the recruit fails to bring any evidence of being a sound character he was discharged, the bitter experience of 1919 was still fresh. For instance No. 1729 recruit Saidan Shahkuki Khel, 2/10 company was discharged on the last day of 1946 'unlikely to become efficient soldier. Medical grounds were another factor for retention in the Khyber rifles, sepoy Azam Khan of 4/17 company was discharged also on the last day of 1946 on medical grounds. The last punishment of the year 1946 was given

to the Sepoy Awal Shah for 'stealing government property' he was given 21 days rigorous punishment. The KR were stationed at Landi Kotal, there was an army brigade strength present at the station as well known as the field brigade Landi Kotal. Rifle .303 was the standard weapon and firing it without permission was an offence punishable with fines. The discipline and all other matters were conducted under the 1941 NWFC Law, the section 9{p} deals with the firing of weapon. All promotions in the corps especially that of officers and subedars apart from postings were published in the NWFP government gazette.

The Khyber rifles were deployed at Landi Kotal being the headquarters with one wing at Ali Masjid & Shagai {No.2 wing under command Major M.C Smith} and other at Landi Kotal { No 1 wing Major J.Letts he was reverted back to military in March 1947 and was replaced by Major J.M.Penly}.

Muslims officers included captain Kaarmatullah followed by captain Jaahngir Khan. The pioneer Indian officers {junior commissioned officers} of Khyber Rifles were Subedar Sohbat Khan Kuki Khel, subedar Ziarat Khan Qambar Khel, subedar Aka Khel Shah Sipah, subedar Haider Khan Qambar Khel, subedar Sheikh Nur Malik Din Khel, Subedar Hasham Ali Zakha Khel, Jemadar Sadozai Kuki Khel, Jemadar Wazir Shilman, Jemadar Hussain Gul Qambar Khel, Jemadar Lal

akbar qambar khel and Jemadar Khiamat Khan Kamrai. They were the nucleus around which the khybewr rifles took birth in 1946, they all underwent year of probation and they were confirmed in their rank in March 1947. In the same breadth there were retirements also, Jemadar Bahadur Khan MDK and subedar fazl rahim were transferred to pension establishment in the spring of 1947. Probation period was strict and only the officers who passed the scrutiny were confirmed in the rank and in other cases the period was extended in case there was any doubt in efficiency like Jemadar payo Gul and alam sjhah had an extension of six months before they were confirmed in their ranks. Same holds true for havildars who also had to undergo probation period of six months.

1947. Year started on a pleasant and promising start with commandant making promotion, four naiks were promoted havildar on 3rd January 1947 with another four becoming naiks and three becoming lance naiks, further 33 were made lance naiks { nine Mullagori, eight qamar Khel, four Zakka Khel, ten from Kuki Khel and three from Malik din Khel }. Promotion from sepoy to lance naik was based upon qaum; however demotion had nothing to do with qaum rather it was based on efficiency, as naik Ghundal Khan Aka Khel learnt on 3rd January when he was reduced to the rank of for inefficiency. Discipline was kept strict from the embryo stage, loss of empty case was a crime having a

punishment of rupee one as fine. When the pay of a soldier was rupees 18 per month. There were frequent transfers from one wing to other from one company to the other. A sepoy had the choice to get his discharge by paying rupees 30/-; it depended upon service as well. Punishment and rewards were the prerogative of the commandant, a wing commander would recommend the soldiers for promotion, on the other hand he would also make a charge sheet for the commandant to award punishment. Absent without leave, over stay leave were the two most common features of soldiers getting punishment. Fourteen days rigorous imprisonment was a normal sentence for over staying leave even if it does not exceed three days in length. Clerks usually get away in such matters one they are educated and as such knew how to manipulate the regulations but they had a sensitive work to perform, they were paid a staff allowance of Rs 10/pm from regimental fund. Clerk Syed Hussain and soldier Clerk Mahmud Khan were the most efficient, Lala Sita Ram was the head clerk. Rendering of the government issued items before the expiry of date was another crime. Loss of rifle component was again fined with recovery made through the pay. These include even a small component such as screw band inner, nut screw protector or screw plate butt.

Drivers for rash driving were charged and punished as well, driver Payo Shah was deprived of three

months driver allowance in mid February 1947 for injuring a soldier of army at Peshawar in mid December 1946, Naik Abdul Majeed had to forfeit his two month driving allowance for rash driving 'he drove a government truck in a negligent manner'.. Lance Naik Ati Khan forfeited three days pay for exceeding speed limit in Landi Koytal camp. Sepoy driver Zangir also had to forfeit his three days pay for driving on right of right without sufficient cause. The aim was to instill the traffic discipline and there is no better and more efficient way than inflicting financial loss. Even use of foul language or insulting manners by a sepoy or any junior to his senior was a charge sheet offense

Even cooks were not saved from the discipline, loss of cooking utensils was a crime and punishable with fine, Jemadar Khaisat Gul and Sepoy Gul Zir were both fined rupees 2-11 each for the loss of one parat and one katora. Lance Naik Marjan was the nursing orderly, he lost one field dressing in last week of February 1947 and was fined 0-11-6 rupees. Breaking of a bulb was another crime punishable with fine, Sepoy Baidar Gul had never seen an electric bulb before and he hit it with a stone to see what is inside he had to pay Rs 2/12/- for the knowledge he gained. If a sentry failed to perform his duty then it was his guard commander who had to face the music, reduced to Naik. Lack of items at post was again the fault of post commander, e.g. Naik Gulistan at

fort Manda {No.1 wing} reprimanded ‘ an act prejudicial to good order and discipline, in that he as post commander did not ensure that the men of his post were in possession of oil bottles, pull throughs, and seals’. But the best is when Lance naik Kaim gul was charge on 15th april 1947 bthe last ady of Lieutenant colonel’s Booth ‘s command ‘ an act prejudiced to good order & military discipline in that he was extremely idle on guard’ ; end result was ‘deprived of his lance naik rank’. Lieutenant colonel sharif maintained the asme high standards of discipline, improper dress for guard duty, failing to report that the telephone at the post is out of order and to ensure that the sentry at his piquet is alert wee the charges which resulted in severe reprimand for Havildar Sher affhan at Piquet 3040 on 25th april 1947 , the very first day of Shariff’s command . In another case a sentry was given seven days punishment’that a while sentry {sepoy Baz gul} did not obey the guard’s commander’s order to stop talking to a passing civillian’.

A subedar on promotion was put on a probation period of one yaer, a naib subedar was called a Jemadar anda subear as subedar. Lieutenant{temporary Capatin } K.D. dance was a jolly officer and he joined the Khyber Rifles in January 1947, captain karamatullah was the sole muslim officer in Khyber rifles till February 1947. In the absence of commandant the wing commander at landi kotal {Major J.Letts} used to

perform as the commanding officer, note the difference. Good service pay an incentive for keeping the discipline intact it was Rupees three for a havildar and rupees two for te naik. Musketry prizes were meant for good firer, in very such event Havildar Jallat Khan scored 62 points in medium machine gun category, Naik Sherza Khan had the first position in 1st Class with 45 points. Prize generally range between rupee one to two. Soldiers were granted two months leave and officers 28 days leave known as War leave within india.

Training of different trade was carried out rigourously, signalers were trained at peshawar signals it included Morse Code reading, exchange operating, wireless procedures and radio telegraphy; they were judged as good, very good or very fair in each category, signal platoon commander was Jemadar Said Amir and he was authorized to draw a special allowance. Their examination included buzz reading, signaling, flag reading, Helio or lamp reading, cable jointing and cells primary.

Company weapon courses were attended at Infantry weapons wing, infantry school at Saugor. The students were graded in knowledge and in instructional ability, Jemadar Khialmat Shah and havildar Said Shah both attended the course and where as Khialmat was awarded above average grade, Said got average in knowledge and below average in instructional ability.

Signal training was conducted at army signal school at poona, a jemadar was authorized a batman in normal course of duty and also while on a course as well, it may comes as surprise but it used to atke only three cadys to move from Landi Nkotal and report at Poona. Arsenal stores were brought from Rawalpindi.

An educational establishment aws arised in april 1947, there were 15 soldies who formed par of it headed by Jemaadr Safdar Khan and Jemadar Gulab Khan they wee given a staff allowance of Rs 10/-pmNaik Makhmud Gul MDK, it thus ceased the pupil –teacher who thusb ceased to draw their staff pay of Rs 5/-

The purchase of mules was conducted from Saharanpur wherea party of no less than ten soldies with ahavildar would proceed for purchase from Remount Depot; it would atke almost three weeks for the complete exercise. These mules were branded with letter K, Khyber Rifles had the mules having serial number from 800 onwards for instance No.K891 was amare and K979 was a Gelding mule. Sick animals were treated and admitted at Peshaawr veterinary hospital , a mule driver was always required to act as the attendant. In March 1947 mule driver stayed at Peshaawr vet hospital with two sick donkeys for almost three weeks and it aw counted as duty.

Ration was good and sufficient , soldiers were provided ration at reduced rates , in January 1947 the KR was providing ration at following rates. Atta 3 seers and two chattaks cost one rupee, in same amount a soldier could buy 12 chattaks of sarsoon oil, 11 seers of salt in one rupee, tea black loose was 3/5 per seer, Dal gran was costing 4 seers per single rupee rice was bit expensive as Daud Zai rice fetched only one seer and nine chatatks in one rupee, other quality of rice was known as hashtnagri, sugar and gur were almost being sold on same price 1 seer and 10 chatatks for sugar and only one chattak less for gur. Milk was supplied by the contractor and also by the military adiry , contractor was supplying at a rate of -9/- per seer and military adiry at -9/6, per seer . from april 1947 B Lipton white label tea was issued to troops as part of action in one pound packet, usual method was that platoons would draw the tea and then use it collectively, one pound tea was good for 160 soldiers for a day i.e. one chattak per 20 men per day

Clerk Shiva another Hindu , an efficient typist he was mainly responsible for typing the Part 2 orders and as such was always held in high esteem by the soldiers. Kot or pay ahvildars were responsible for maintaining the platoon messing in order. The wearing of equipment was in line with the south wazirsitan scouts where the haversack was on left side and water bottle on right side . from 1st march 1947 the men admitted in hospitals were

not allowed to have the ration and compensatory allowance for the period of stay in hospital. Venereal disease on detection rendered the effected person deprived of proficiency pay till he has been declared medical fit from infection, Sepoy payo Khan was the very first case detected in the corps , he had contracted the infection in October 1946 but was detected in March 1947.

There were few Hindus and Sikhs in Khyber rifles as well like Bhisti gulab singh, Ram Dass, sweeper walia ,Marai,Uda,Nawab and Peshawari, to name few all such trades including dhobi come under the S company. Even Muhammad ayub dhobi was struck off tyhe strength because he wasw unlikely to become an efficient dhobi wherea s Dhobi Zain gul was retained. There wee honoraray apponintents among the trades, these were purely for keeping discipline and had no effect in pay, only commandant was authorised to make such honoraray appointments, very first such honoray appoint holders includedLangri samandar as head langri, sher akbar as head khalasi, Head tailor Allah bakhsh, head Mochi Fazal Rakhman, Head carpenter Mohamamd Hussain, Mule driver saifed gul, bhisthi Ju muhamamd and Khalasi sher akbar were al made honoraray lance naiks.In june 1946 one silk bed sheet and one hankerchief was stolen from sikh Gurdwaar at Jamrud and Sepoy Lowar Khann was found guilty ; he had to

undergo 28 days rigorous imprisonment for this folly. were stolen from

In april 1947 another batch of recruits were inducted and trained they all were from Khyber tribes mainly Mullagori and Kuki khel afridi. These recruits after enlistment wre posted to the wings who wee responsible for atrining which included mainly firing and drill.

Lieutenant colonel Mohamamd sheriff Khan MBE, took over the command of the Khyber rifles on 25th april 1947, Khyber rifles thuas have the distioction of being the only Frontier Corps corps to ahve a native Muslim officer in command on independence . lieutenant Rahmat Ullah Durrani of FF Rifles joined Khyber Rifles on 24th july 1947

14th august 1947. It was a glorious day, sunny but windy, few clouds hovering over the Tantarra ridge, subedar major Azim khan qambar Khel and Jemadar Dilawar Khan Kuki Khel were made second lieutenants on this auspious day.

Khyber Rifles 1950s

In july 1954 the class composition of the KR underwent a drastic change when eight platoons of afridi replaced by the six platoons of Khattaks which comprised of two platoons each of Akora, seni and barak

and two platoons of yousafzais, the latter were transferred from Zhb militia and former from south Waziristan Scouts. Thus the original composition of the corps being comprised exclusively of Khyber Agency tribes was altered, next year in August 1955 an additional but temporary increase of eight platoons alongwith two officers were sanctioned , this was exclusively for the Warsak Dam protection which was being constructed. These eight platoons had Orakzai & Bangash both sunnis {two platoons each} , Adam Khel Afridis also had two platoons and Daur and Wazir one each; these platoons were newly raised where as other were transferred from Tochi Scouts and south Waziristan scouts. Daur were for the first time inducted in Frontier Corps, The overall strength of the corps thus reached an all time high of 9 officers, 58 JCOs, 101 havildars, 102 naiks and 1639 lance naiks and sepoy's there by making a grand total of 1909.

Major Zia Ul Haq. Later chief of army staff and president of Pakistan , reported at Khyber rifles in March 1954 from guides cavalry, he had served on temporary attachment with Tochi scouts also but now he was permanently posted, he commanded No.3 wing which mainly look after the Warsak Dam. His family also moved here at Landi Kotal. Major Zia was a popular officer mainly due to his good nature, humbleness and religious inclination and all these are the qualities most

required in a scout alongwith good physical stamina and professional approach. He despite all his efforts could not master the Pashtu language but he understood it when others were speaking. A keen tennis player and always a volunteer for gashts. When General Zia became the president and he visited his old Rifles, his handiwal approached him and requested for the construction of a track till his village Killay, General smilingly not only sanctioned it as per his handiwal's desire but also made sure that electricity should also reach there. Present Chahrbagh road thus not only benefits the killi but the Khyber Rifles Wing also gained immense advantage as it now linked it with main pass.

In 1957 the corps was being commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Sherin Khan who later on not only became the Inspector General Frontier Corps but also had the distinction of becoming a three star general officer. As a commandant his contributions are many but compiling of the standing orders was a deep reaching act. Khyber Rifles was responsible for the protection of the international border {Durand line all along the Khyber agency's limits, it was also responsible to guard and protect within the agency the lines of communication both rail and road, protection of Warsak Dam and other pumping stations and above all to assist

the political administration in the maintenance of law and order.

5th September 2013 - Chitral

I am back to Chitral Scouts and Chitral once again this time the circumstances are different , I came here primarily because I got a text from Carey Schoffield who is the principal of Major Langland School at Chitral and I had met her once in the last visit and quite impressed with her efforts , academic credentials and above all her personality she is in mid fifties but quite attractive and I think she thinks and acts like a Victorian era romantic lady but it suits her. Any way I got from the Landi Kotal with the commandant Khyber Rifles and then got hold of a taxi {fare 9500rupees} but for a noble cause it is worth it. Driver an Afghan Sameen , well by dinner time we were at the Chitral Mess passing through the Malakand and crossed Lowari Top , weather was good and road also good. Security on road is appreciable. I remember meeting two havildar of 31 Baluch at the base of Lowari, and I am motivated by his words ‘ that our forefathers sacrificed their lives so I can be free today , now it is my turn’. The excitement of coming day was intense , I was constantly sending the messages to Carey informing about my location , she invited me for breakfast next day. I made a commitment

with the driver to pick me up next day at 0630 hours , but neither he came nor the waiter brought my clothes from ironing, in the end I got the clothes and got hold of a new taxi and managed to reach the Hindukush heights by 0720 , five minutes late.

In the school it was opposite to my expectations but good, I had to give a five minute talk to the school in the assembly , I did by getting on to the flag post and speaking in loud but powerful voice, telling the boys how important freedom is , why we are celebrating defence day, the nobility of the profession of soldiering and so on , later I sang the national anthem with them and then realized that these boys are in fact keeping words with me and very few know the national anthem {same as in our school days}. Then the day was spent with the teachers, giving talks to three classes one by one, tea with school staff and another talk with Carey mostly about Alvi's death circumstances. I drove with her to the hotel and realized that she wants me to go back without having lunch , but I just wanted to say hello to major Siraj . I realized that probably Carrey did not wanted me to meet the Siraj , may be it is my own mind but I could feel something in the air. I did not had the breakfast so when I was invited by Carey for lunch I accepted it, another person Mr Arif Habib also joined in he had arrived just today{5th September} and seems to be old acquaints of Carey because she had embraced him

although only customarily but she did and she did not did that with me. Anyway lunch was ok , I don't like the food in Chitral after the food of Khyber. Moreover I have noticed that these Chitralis are less hospitable than the Khyberis. I just about history and realized that Carey has very little knowledge about it , her field is English anthology { I have made a note to ask what is it}. But by and large Carey is a respectful person and I admire her being here in chitral , I have always considered her since I have met her to be a Victorian era romantic mem sahibha. Her transport dropped me at the Chitral Mess. I am conscious of petrol prices and as such don't like being dropped or picked by Carey's vehicle but irony is that I can go thee at hotel in a taxi{fare rupees 800} but there is no such thing to come back thus by force I have to accept it.

Friday

Well the actual defence day is today and and I managed to reach the Chitral Scouts fort in their vehicle although I missed the vehicle taking the adjutant Major Kazmi, it was nice to see him, commandant is new but he had gone to Mirkhani for reconnaissance and conference. Chitral Scouts look good in their head gear of local cap with plume. I sat in adjutant office and same mental frustration which seems to be the hall mark of the Chitral scouts,' sir commandant is away and when he will come only then we can extend help in history data'

nothing wrong but this sentence but I know the background so I just sat quietly hearing what all is going around. Almost all officers were sitting there Capatin Nazar of 148 AD he is from Gilgit, Captain Hamdan is from Guides he has been promoted since our last meeting and a real good officer, the doctor the DDMS. Cup of tea and I was on listening watch, constant telephone rings, constant scouts or subedar marching in , television on mute, mobile . The issue seems to be the threat of miscreants from across the border , an interception has been made on their communication network along with source report which is the cause of ripple, then a Moulvi has made a speech in mosque calling for elimination of Ismailis from Chitral and he has been called by police, the scouts want him to be put behind bars but police says that there is no such law for this. I recall even in Chaklala garrison last year the Moulvi in the mosque called for action against the shias but nothing was done against him, any action and that Moulvi will become a n hero overnight. The army {17 division} is in charge of the district but the problem is that for all practical purpose the district is settled and thee is no imposition of any regulations which states that it is under the army thus a great mass of confusion is in the air. There was a small gathering of college boys in front of the deputy commissioner's office protesting for lack of water and electricity in the college, that is the right of the boys and this is what they or every one does

in this age but orders going out from the adjutant office was to disperse them immediately before the army headquarters start interfering in it. The two men walked in one was SSP of the city{investigation} and he wanted one of his relative to be discharged from service and adjutant agreed to put up the case to the commandant on his arrival on Monday but warned the individual that he will have to spend few days in scouts jail as well on which the individual agreed.

I gave my camera to the photographer to take pictures, the Baar Khanna was at 1230 hours and I was wondering whether I will be allowed or invited in it, with every minute my opinion about the Chitral Scouts was getting worse and worse, it seems that clerks here are very powerful and bit arrogant as well. Well then another message regarding the perceived movement of the miscreants, a lieutenant colonel of military intelligence was also there it was his second day he is from 31 Punjab , a good man, he was also sitting in the office, the news was that some Wazir and Nazir are planning to carry out an attack on the Pakistani post close to Arandu, the weapons have been seen and messages on air confirm it also. Now the Taliban if I can use the word are intelligent enough and at times just by sending false messages they can create a false ripple in the security organizations and unfortunately then all focus gets onto the position mentioned by Taliban in

communication and very conveniently the Taliban strike at other place, in my opinion the Ismailois are the target and they live in upper Chitral so lets see what happens. Adjutant then announced to the Subedar Barkat that officers are too committed so they cannot attend the bara khana and there fore their food should be send to the officers tae bar. I requested adjutant to attend the bara khana as it will allow me to have interaction with scouts ; adjutant ahd no excuse but to allow me .

I was taken by the subedar Barkat, the tent/qannat was pitched in the western part of the fort, it was still in progress so the BHM took me on around of the area, we went to the JCO Mess and I had a visit inside, not in a good sattae , it seems that no one has taken meal here in months or years, same as in Khyber. I met the education JCO who is a n educated person wearing pant/shirt and tie , he has written two books one regarding the women education in Chitral other a novel, I like him he si also the principal of Chitral public school . He mentioned about one scout who is writing the history of Chitral scout I was almost immediately keen to meet him but he said he will find it. Baar Khana was an experience and all my apprehensions about Chitral Scouts turned out to be true. No spoons no glasses , a rush on food like Punjabi village wedding scene, nothing militarily about it , reason absence of officers and lack of

meat in daily diet; anyway I was genuinely upset with the behavior.

Back to the office area met the quarter master who asked me whether I am still here since my first visit or have I come again , a good and intelligent question , I remained quiet. Food inside the tea bar was fantastic, same food as in troops table but here it was in abundance and in a manner that it looked nice, I declined to eat as I had taken meal with troops but in my heart of heart I did not liked this gesture of officers to have food separately even on this day, now the jig saw pieces of Chitral Scouts puzzle are getting into places. The adjutant announced that a book has arrived just now which is on Chitral Scouts history, it is the same book which the education JCO was mentioning, I was really excited and it was thee in urdu and a short glance told me it is nothing new from the past data yet two-three incidents are new. Chitral scouts seems to be having a history of doing mutiny, they did it in 1973 when they were told that other qaums will also be joining the Chitral scouts, they wee at Drosh Qila then , Lieutenant colonel Afzal was the commandant the one who wrote a small pamphlet on Chitral as well, the scouts led by the subedar major then marched from Drosh, occupied Chitral fort and watered the airfield and helipad {polo ground} IGFC Brigadier Naseerullah Babar acme from Peshawar and had to stand on the helicopter for

negotiations with the scouts. The strategic importance of Chitral with hostile Afghanistan was too immense to take this affair lightly, at the end the scouts won it they signed an agreement with the IGFC with subedar major and the ruling prince as witness under which no other qaum is allowed to serve in Chitral scouts,' amazing feat. Next mutiny took place in mid nineties when again the Chitral contingent which was part of a FC Week developed a rift with the wing commander and in the end the contingent was called back to Drosh and court of inquiry conducted and IGFC Major General Ghazi Uddin Rana later gave punishment to over 64 scouts, ranging from seven days to 28 days RI, reduction of ranks, and dismissal from service of the subedar majors. No such steps were taken in 1973. The dismissed subedars later served terms in civil jail and few years later were given the old ranks pension. Now these are rare scenes and unprecedented in nature. It only highlights how important is the subedar major and how vital it is for the officer to keep an eye on the pulse of the things, both mutinies remind me of Gilgit Rebellion of 1947, almost a replica. In the evening I saw the games of Chitral Scouts and it was only on sports field that one feels good about them. Riding of two horses, Chitral Scouts have horses but no riding school. Cricket and football, people just watching and relaxing, looks very good. I developed bit of respect for them now, got Chitral scouts badges from canteen. On my way back I

wanted to get down in the city to buy ink pot but adjutant did not allow me to go walking and made sure the vehicle takes me to bazaar and brings back to mess, a kind gesture. In the bazaar no ink pot , no shop was open due to Friday. Another good aspect is the Pakistan's recovery art Harare in the first test where Younis scored double hundred and saved Pakisatn from a defeat.

Later I sent an text to Carey and have yet to receive the answer back , probably another miss text from me. Lets see. I had a good conversation with lance naik Nazir the library in charge , he has a master degree in islmayiat and is currently doing bachelor of education, I remember how he traced the missing library books , I like him. He gave me some appears and promised to write more.

Saturday.

It is 1000 hours and I have been typing all this and now time for cup of tea and then I will decide what to do.

Tuesday 10th September 2013, chitral.

It is 1930 hours and I am sitting in the library which is one of the best among all the Frontier Corps libraries , I cannot go on without mentioning the Lance

Naik Nazir of education corps, a good man and very hospitable he belongs to Sanobar in upper Chitral , Mastuj area, I am going to his village tomorrow to interview an old war veteran of 1948 Kashmir War, initially the programme was today but there are two jeeps which leaves for his village and both had gone to Dir with apples. Thus I will take the jeep for Buni which is the junction of Yarkhun and another river.

In the morning I had the Chitrali shawl which are made here in the scouts own handloom , they are different for male and females , difference mainly in colour, male is brown or khaki and much larger in size, ladies is bit short in length and colours are generally more dark, like red or black. I was excited about them and later the works havildar brought the tailor also who took my measurement and lets see what he makes in the end.

Morning are very pleasant here, chirping of birds, the music of water flowing over the stones, the breeze passing through maple trees and in between all of a sudden the calling voice of peacock, the panic stricken voices of Chinese hen, I have always seen them in pair and always worried like oriental wives. I was given a lead by the havildar regarding the chappalmakers by the name of Dardon Khan who had a shop at Drosh as well and here he is located in Ataleeq bazaar.

I walked to the bazaar , Tirich Mir was visible toady but partially, weather hot but I enjoyed the walk , I had the white Chitrali cap on me and it helps in breaking the ice with natives and I found myself walking as I am walking in any where else in world. I passed by the old bags shop , my own bag given for manufacture are not yet ready in Peshawar thus I am looking for a hand bag, I found one antique looking bag and I told him to keep it for me. The chappalmaker shop was a n hoax as there were ordinary looking chapapls, the owner not present and someone sitting who was absolutely blank about this what I gathered from him was that there are no chappalmakers in Chitral. Next target was to find a map of Chitral from Faiz Book store. I took the hidden path behind the main bazaar , passing through village and emerging from the city end, they are in process of erecting and constructing a new bridge over the stream. There seems to be a crowd present all the time on bridge watching this feat. I had to ask many shops regarding the amp before I was able to hit the Faiz Book store but he did not had the map. On my way back I stopped at a dry fruit shop and bought the pea nuts. Wall nuts are very popular here but they will be solid in another two weeks. The major areas are upper Chitral and Kaalshvalleys which have ripe wall nuts which are bigger in size, the size of Chitral wall nuts is rather small. I did went inside the centennial school which was opened up in 1926 by the HH Nasirulmulik, principal was very kind and took

me around the building, the main hall is gracious and spacious , I especially liked the Persian and Iqbal's couplets written on wall. School have a tennis court as well, a tree at the court have a rather unusual plaque which was put inside the trunk of maple tree and today it has been covered by the trunk an unusual sight.

I got my chappal polished from a street vendor and paid him rupees twenty, then bought two books one is the proceedings of third Hindu Kush conference held this year and other an urdu on the life of Nasirulmulk {1936-1943 ruler}, at times one finds a wealth of information in these local books. Then long up walk back to mess, it is quite a walk and good one. Traffic is not much here yet one gets the smoke of vehicle passing close by and changing gear, air is generally clean and fresh with no odour, streets are clean and very few stray dogs. One sees and notice women walking alone or with a child wearing veil but there eyes are always staring at you, I wear glasses to have a better look at them. Have yet to talk to any lady here other than the Carey Schoffield but natives have own class and charsihma, I am more keen in having conversation with a Persian family.

In the mess lawn I had a talk with Nazir and mess JCO about the local food delicacies surprisingly there are no sweet dishes as part of Chitral food culture even the tae consumed in upper Chitral has a salt in it and the

popular dish of Kheer has salt too. There are many types of bread here, one having only walnut inside is known as Polai and one having potatoes and wall nut inside the bread is called 'Aalomojhi'. Ghulmandi is another bread in which goat cheese is put inside a braed and then pure ghee or butter is poured after heating over it. Walnut oil is used as a sprinkle over rice to give it an aroma, Chamrogh is the apricot juice in it dry apricot is soaked in water for a day and then filtered with fine cotton cloth and you get only the juice and no pulp of apricot, I have tried it at Skardu only draw back is that apricot initially upset your stomach quite heavily , but in other words it cleans your stomach thoroughly. Shuula is another dish which is a mixture of rice and duck meat. Chitral is famous for its bird shooting and that is why I was curious as how they prepare the shoot meat, but I think they do not bar b que it the way Afridi or Shinwari do. Chitrالي kaalaey is another dish in which small pieces of bread alongwith Kaveer which is a speciality of Mulkhow area it is like gaarmamsala or kalazera of Rattu, it is used in cooking and also as a drink to fight fever, it is grown on ground and have flowers which after drying are stored at present it cost Rupees 400 per kilogram , walnuts are rupees 300 per kilogram.

Chitral Scouts were raised on 23rd July 1903 at Chitral in 1903 but shifted to Drosh in 1926 and later move back to Chitral in 1992. On the eve of First Great

War it had strength of almost a thousand men organized into two wings. In 1942 it was named as Chitral State Scouts and came under the control of Frontier Corps, in 1953 it reverted to its old nomenclature. Chitral State Scouts along with Chitral State Bodyguards played a key and vital role in the Kashmir Liberation of 1947-48 especially in the liberation of Skardu City. In June 1973 a third wing was raised. In June 1986 one more wing was added and next year in July two more wings and artillery battery were also added. Chitral Scouts history is interlink with the history and politics of Chitral State itself. Chitral Scouts have quite a few distinctive marks for once they do not speak Pashtu secondly they are from a settled district which has been a princely state in the past and above all they all are from one qaum. There are other cultural features as well, geographically they remained cut off from rest of the country during winter months,; their only access via Afghanistan . Not long ago Toyota Hiace used to ply between the Peshawar and Chitral during winter through Jalalabad into Asmar then into Arandu Valley in Pakistan; straight to the Chitral. Lowari tunnel is still not open for public use but in winter, traffic is allowed thus a millennium old issue has been resolved, allowing a ground link with Indus valley. Chitral is the northern most and surprisingly one of the most peaceful, liberal & modern enlightened district of Pakistan,;

Chitral has a history, which is not yet fully understood, the state known, as Chitral is infact an amalgamation of many small fiefdoms, serfdoms and odd tribes most obvious being the Kafir. Chitral is in fact a combination of two major rivers namely the TrichMir River and Yarkhun River; both meet just a mile upstream of present day airport and just miles away from the century old fort and the city itself. These two rivers express two distinct identities and cultures and it is only at Chitral that these two cultures join together.

Chitral is the gateway to Asian sub continent as no less than half a dozen passes all above 12000 feet opens into it from west and equal number are on east and few odd in south which allows any traveller from central Asia to enter it and then follow one of the river and exit it through the River Chitral into Afghanistan at Arandu; it is possible only through Arandu Pass that cultivation and fruits can be sent to Peshawar or Kabul from Chitral in a day and this is what makes Chitral special in relation to Afghanistan.

The two upper valleys which are separated by high mountains' as high as 18000 feet represent two distinct civilisation, the eastern or the right valley as seen from Chitral is known as Yarkhun Valley or Mastuj Valley, it leads towards the Wakhan strip and further

towards Kashgir by going through the Broghul and Darwaza pass 'door' and very rightly it is the door to sub continent . This valley or path also leads towards the Gilgit, Indus Valley and further into the Chinese Turkestan through the Leh and Kashmir. The TirthMir River Valley also known as Lotukh or Injigan leads towards the Badkhashan and further west towards the Aral sea. Now all this is seen from present but let's go back 5000 years ago and see how it looks then. The major evidence in hand is the geography which has remained unchanged in all these years , yes there are mountain landslides, there were earthquakes, floods but by and large TirthMir still stands as it was thousand years ago, other interesting evidence is the presence of idol Kafir tribe which is unique in a sense that it has been able to preserve its identity even today, they are not nomadic in nature but to some extent holds the key to past.

Aryan migration started in 2000-3000 years ago from Central Asian highlands which were climatically extreme in winter with little to grow moreover the built in natural instinct of human must have drove him downwards. We have only hypothesis but nothing concrete to prove like the Egyptians and Mesopotamian or Chinese civilisations, but one thing is common that civilisation took birth on the banks of river and in the lap of mountains ; thus there is nothing abnormal to write

that the early civilisation took birth at the TirchMir and from there it moved down ward and towards the west. Mountains have a charm of themselves and in all our mythology world over it has been the mountains which remained the abode of god, let it not be forgotten that Moses went up the Mount Sinai to have the commandments.

Chitral has another unique feature the presence of 3000 odd **Kafir tribes** among over whelming peaceful Muslims; there are no Christians and neither any church in Chitral, the last church on Peshawar – Chitral track is at Mardan in south and none knows about any other in the north for another thousand miles. The Kafir tribe is settled in the lower Chitral on the western bank of Chitral River scattered in three valleys namely the Rumbir, Birir and Bhumbirit . Physically Chitral is the largest district of Pakistan in terms of area, the highest peak of Chitral is TirchMir which is 25679 feet high and is almost in the upper left of the District. Chitral is like many other mountainous towns, a river passing through it , green valley, houses on the top and peace. Unlike Tochi Valley it is much more green and wide with higher peaks. As compare to the Kurram Valley it is narrower with more steep banks and field elevations. Gilgit and Chitral seems to be identical in nature and their history is also similar in pattern. It is the presence of colourful Kafirs which gives Chitral its unique flavor of history.

Chitral covers an area of 5000 square miles and have a population of 315,000 in 2001. In 1895 the population was under 1,00,000 humans, in 1947 it was 1,14,000 and 1,50,000 in 1961. Chitral is a confluence of two valleys , the western being a TrichMir and the eastern valley runs a distance of 250 miles starting from Sor Yarkun near Oxus few miles east of Broghul in the north , this valley is known as Yarkhun Valley and have Mastuj as the major town. These two valleys and rivers join each other few miles upstream of present airport. From here onwards it is known as Chitral river and runs down to the south in a winding but plain area to the Arandu in the south west, Chitral attained the status of a settled district in 1969, it is divided into two administrative layers, the upper Chitral is known as Mastuj sub division and comprise of three tehsils namely Mastuj, Torkhow and Mulkhaw with Booni as the headquarters, Chitral sub division comprises of Chitral, Drosh and Lotkow tehsils. History of the Chitral Scouts is mainly spread in the lower Chitral areas.

Early History

Not much is known about Chitral's early history, it is not mentioned by Herodotus or by the Alexander The Great's historians. Although it seems quite logical basing upon the history to assume that some troops of him must have intruded into the Chitral Valley as no less than 19 passes were available to the troops of Alexander.

The Kafirs of Hindukush are the only physical evidence of Chitral's past. Kafirs have two categories, one is known as the Red Kafirs or the Broghul other as the Kalash or the Black Kafirs; it was the Red who was believed to be the masters. Chitral is the first of the many valleys or waterways which the Aryans adopted for their migration downwards. The beauty, serenity, peace and above all the abundance of fresh water all along must have been very tempting for them to settle astride the water flow. Chitral's history is interwoven with other mountainous states like Gilgit, Dir, Hunza and Swat. Being on the edge of all of them it attained a greater strategic significance. It is the door way to the Central Asia or vice versa a route to the plains. On the north it is bounded by Oxus or the Wakhan, on the west by Gilgit, Yasin and Ishkoman mountainous states, on the south by Dir and Swat and in the south west by the Afghan province of Asmar and Nuristan.

TirchMir was the mountain god standing majestically at the west of Chitral; the early morning sun rays cast an golden radiant around it and at sunset the crimson color bids farewell to the day journey. Like all other mountains the Aryans worshipped mountains, they were remote, inaccessible yet visible with efforts. Clouds generated around them bringing rain and darkness. At night these clouds would wrap the full moon around its web creating myths and fables;

TirchMir is no exception rather it is among those very rare mountains along with Rakaposhi and NangaParbat to have fertile valley running around them. Even among these Tirch Mir stands out as it is more fertile, plain and green in nature. West of Chitral town a couple of miles up stream is the confluence of two rivers which are also two distinct paths of history. The eastern river leads to further north into Wakhan, Hunza, Gilgit, Sinkiang, Kashgir and into China { or towards the Rakaposhi, K-2 , }, where as the western or TirchMir river leads into Afghanistan. Alexander the Great came down towards Indus from the Oxus marching along the fringes of Tirch Mir and there is no reason to doubt that he did not cross into the Tirch Mir River and following River Chitral and later Kunar passed through the Arandu into Bajaur.

Before the arrival of Islam the TirchMir kingdom was under the suzerainty of King of Kabul, Raja Jaipal. It was a Hindu kingdom , Hinduism itself cannot be expressed in the same language as one can use for Christianity ; it si a conglomeration of over five hundred different sects ranging from worshippers of Shiva to the Hanuman. Chitral was one of the finest among such fanatics. Kafirs even at present performs the rituals of social life which are so alien to the civilization even then. They do not bury their dead rather leave them in a wooden casket under a tree. The present grave yard's pine trees are centuries old and wooden casket

also of same age with bones visible of recent entrants. The marriage another social indicator of humanity is different too, every village had a male bull responsible for continuity of race. This concept is much closer to the Spartans concept of ideal warriors however here the intention and application seems to be different in the absence of any military laurels. Chitral remained as popular spot for flesh market as Badakshan across the valley in Afghanistan was famous for its horses. That can be one explanation of such a variety of languages as caravans moving west towards the Kashmir preferred crossing it through Arandu thus having only one river to cross instead of two if they choose any pass west of Chitral. Kafirs have one major mystery among their culture, their colourful dress and cap which is part of attire have sea shells and the pattern of the dress is have marked similarity with the tribes of Burma and Thailand especially the mountain tribes of Chiang Mai. There is one theory that these kafirs came from the east rather than the lost descendents of Greek troops. But by and large Chitral remained hidden in history and present hypothesis about its history are based upon geography which has remained intact in all these millenniums. The visible, living, strong and alien cultural fragments thus naturally brew theories.

Islam came to the Chitral or Khowistan in the aftermath of the Chinese Turk army defeat in the hands

of Arabs in 751 AD. Chitral then was ruled by the Sia Posh or Black Kafirs. The upper valleys or Upper Chitral was divided into many smaller Khowistan, Torkhow the upper Khow, Mulkhow the lower Khow these names persists even today. Buddhism had its impact in the area with one odd inscription of 9th Century AD records the fact that the area is under King Jaipal of Kabul. Khovar language has quite a number of words from Sanskrit in it. One stupa of Buddha is still intact at Torkhow known as Kalandar-i-Bhuttani , {mendicant of stone}. Broghul Pas has been the main entry route of Mongols and tartars in the past. Marco Polo referred to the country as Bolor which included Gilgit as well. Another strand of history recalls a Chinese tribe by the name of Yarkhun to have invaded the area.

Khovar is the language of Chitral River from snout till Mirkani in the south with varying dialect , in its pure form it is being spoken in the upper Chitral in Mulkhow and Torkhow area ; ironically it does not have any written characters thus Persian remained the official language since early days later replaced by Urdu and English. Khovar is like Urdu because it is also a combination of Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit language. Till mid seventies a journal in Khovar language was monthly published by the Government of Pakistan to promote the language. In Lotkow, Madaglasht and Kalashgum the dialect is different. Persian is still spoken

and understood by the aristocracy in the Madaglasht in the Shishikuh Valley, Yudgah is spoken in upper Lotkow Valley above Parabek, Dangarik or Palola is spoken in Ashret, Kalkatak , Beroi and Nastiwar or Gawarbati is the language of Arandu. These varieties of language when seen in the context of the Waziristan which has much more area but only two dialect reinforces the theory that Chitral has been abode of many races and cultures which with the passage of time adopted a working pattern rather amicably. The abundance of fresh water and green pastures all along the various streams provided a solid logic against the utter use of violence for the land as observe in the Waziristan.

By 10th century AD the area was ruled by the Kafirs however Mahmud of Ghazna's rise and his utter destruction of idols in the India must have been the cause of the downfall of kafirs and slowly but gradually they started getting into the small valleys. Tamerlane's conquest of India and his slaughter of Hindus was the last of the nails in the kafir culture. The area however retained its identity as it even today is known as Kafiristan although the major portion which lies in Afghanistan is now known as Nuristan. In 16th century the Chitral river banks were under the control of Mughuls with Sah Rais on the throne. His advisor was Sangin Ali an Persian , with the passage of time the family of Sangin Ali came into power and remained so

till to date. Within the family there are lineages the Katoras take their name from the Sangin Ali's grandson where as the Khushwaqt take it from the second son.

Present History of Chitral begins in 1819 when Maharaja Ranjit Singh captured Kashmir and handed it over to the Dogra as a reward and later British after the defeat of Khalsa in the Anglo –Sikh wars of 1842-1848 sold it to the same Dogra family . Kashmir under the Ghulab Singh expanded outwards to the territories hence alien to the native s of India. They moved east ward towards the Tibet, northwards towards the Laddakh and west wards towards the Gilgit across the river Indus. This was the first and till to date the last invading force crossing Indus into Karakoram mountain range. By 1842 Kashmir durbar had a foothold at Gilgit and became the king makers, a garrison were established at Gilgit as well. The extreme northern states like Hunza and Nagar remained free from these incursions. In the present day Swat there was no state rather a loose conglomeration of khanates like Tanger, Darrel which were rather big in size and located on the eastern banks of River Indus. Kabul was the other major stake holder having a claim to the area of Kashmir as well, thus these small mountainous hamlet states became a battle prize among these two predominant states. Sikhs were religiously tolerant of Muslims and they had the big advantage in having a beard and a turban as part of

religion both these items are integral part of western bank of River Indus's cultural and religion.

After the annexation of Punjab in 1849 by the British East India Company {BEIC}, Chitral at that time was ruled by the Mehtar, there were two distinct families based upon geography who were the ruling elite, the Khuswaqts in the upper Chitral with stronghold at Mastuj and the Kators who were living in the lower Chitral. It was a classical narrative as both had the common blood running in their veins but both trying to extend their hold. Numerous small principalities in the small valleys put their weight behind each family basing upon their chances of success. Murder was common feature to grab the power. Maharaja of Kashmir made a move and had an alliance with the Kator Shah Afzal Mehtar of Chitral against the Khuswaqts of Mastuj who were attempting to attack Gilgit with the aid of Yasin's ruler. This was the start of Kashmir getting involved into the Chitral affairs. In 1855 for a short period Chitralis occupied Mastuj but were driven out. The Khuswaqts of Mastuj had Gilgit under their control from 1848 till 1860 when Sikhs got it back after the death of Khushwaqt. On the other hand Shah Afzal Kator died in 1856 and after an intriguing episode his son Aman Ul Mulk became the Mehtar in 1857 and ruled till 1892. He is the father of modern day Chitral. He tried to unite the upper and lower Chitral ,expanded his territory which included

Gilgit, Ghizar & Thui and Chiga Sarai in present day Afghanistan. Khuswaqts led by Pahlwan made a venture to capture Gilgit in 1880 but in his absence Aman Ul Mulk captured Mastuj and that ends the story of Khuswaqts.

Aman Ul Mulk more importantly opened up the country for the British. In 1885 the need to understand the western approaches to India was felt. The threat of Russia making an incursion through the Broghul Pass was a distant reality. An army team led by Colonel Lockhart visited Chitral and met Mehtar Aman Ul Mulk.

British in North. British venture into the north started in 1830 when travelers and foreign department officers disguised as saints and travelers gathered knowledge about the remote north. Names like George Hayward who was murdered in 1870 at Darkot, Mason , Burnes of Bukhara and later George Robertson who was the first British to live in kafir territory made headlines. Britain established an agency at Gilgit in 1880 with Colonel Biddulph as the political agent but it was short lived. In 1892 the Gilgit Agency was again established which also monitored the affairs in Chitral. Chitral after Colonel Lockhart was visited by Colonel Algernon Durand in 1888 and 1889. Chitral or more precisely Aman Ul Mulk played power politics, in the past Chitral had been a subject of Badakshan in a nominal manner and now Kabul asserted the same pressure. Mehtar tried

to have a betrothal with Kabul but it did not took place, on the other hand when Mehtar felt threatened from Kabul he made an overture towards Kashmir in 1874 which resulted in a kind of pact between two sates linking the defence of Chitral with Kashmir; British were the referee; in the end Chitral came under British sphere of influence and this became a bone of contention between the Kabul and Calcutta.

1891 was another water shed year in the history of northern areas. The Nilt and Hunza valley rulers became embroiled in a clash with the British led by Colonel Durand with British and Kashmir troops under his command. In December the forts at Nilt were overcome after great dexterity shown by the troops. Chitral remained neutral in this affair; Gilgit Scouts took birth after this expedition and a permanent agency was established at Gilgit with political agent in charge. It must be kept in mind that agency was established at Gilgit but it still remained under the Kashmir control it was only in 1936 that the agency was leased by the British from Kashmir.

Durand Line & Siege of Chitral - 1895. In 1893 the agreement was signed by the Afghanistan and British India to have a demarcation of their respective international boundaries which for the first time were

established as well. The tribes interpretation of the agreement was based upon the hypothesis that British are intent to wipe out their culture and religion and this soon became a mind set which was fanned by the Afghanistan obviously.

Chitral differs from other parts of Durand Line in a manner because the River Chitral after traversing the territory again falls back to the Afghanistan, there are 29 passes that led to Chitral from Afghanistan staring from Darwaza Pass in the north to the Arandu or Aranwali in the south. Trouble initially started with the demarcation at Asmar within Afghanistan . Umra Khan of Jandol was another key player he was the son in law of Aman ul Mulk, pathan by race he was the chief khan of Lowari Pass. After Aman's death the bloody intrigues for the Mehtarship started among the various sons of late Aman ul Mulk {he had eighteen sons} finally it was the British weight which made Afzal Ul Mulk triumphant, it was short lived as Kabul back Sher Afzal soon took the reins after bloody coup. British now backed Nizam Ul Mulk another son of late Aman ul Mulk this resulted in Sher Afzal leaving the area as he entered through Dorah Pass back into Afghanistan. A British agent George Robertson was stationed at Chitral. He started his move in **January 1893** towards the Chitral from Gilgit with 50 men of 15th Sikh Battalion, Captain Young husband a famous traveller was his assistant along with Lieutenant

Gordon and Bruce. A native by the name Abdul Hakim also accompanied the Robertson. He arrived at Chitral and established himself, he was now the British representative and his main task was to act as a listening post of on the northern gates of India.

Chitral Siege – 1895

The classic act of frontier romance, an mountainous kingdom besieged by the wicked ruler and tribes and held out by a brave and loyal force of natives led by British officers, few casualties, no major clash or massive bloodbath. It was after 1857 that the act of Lucknow Residency was re-enacted with a happy ending, that is how Chitral Siege has gone down in the frontier history. It was different from Hunza & Nagar campaign as no Victoria Cross was awarded . It had a strategic implication had the Umra Kahn of Jandol the most able and famous of the Pathan Khans been successful in his campaign to have Chitral under his influence then the British would have received a serious dent in the Forward policy. The British officers and their escort were threatened and they timely got behind the safety of the fort. Meanwhile Umra Khan, Sher Afzal and Mehtar were all gathered around the fort. The fort held out for well over a month under persistent dangers waiting for relief. The relief forces came from Gilgit and Peshawar.

Chitral State was part of Dir, Swat & Chitral Agency which comprised of vast territory of Hindukush and the border of Peshawar District and thus taken as agency of Peshawar.

In the aftermath of Chitral Siege of 1895, a new political agency was formed known as , Dir & Swat political agency with its headquarters at Malakand, Chitral was added to it a year later in 1896. Thus an assistant political officer used to manage the affairs of the Chitral; before this it was the political agency of Gilgit which was looking after the British interest in the state. It should be kept in mind that in 1891 under the Mehtar Aman ul Mulk the Chitral had agreed to hand over its foreign affairs mainly the relationship with the Afghanistan to the British.

The **Chitral Levies** were raised in 1897 by the assistant political agent at Chitral; it was his personal escort and force to implement the orders, it had a strength of 100 men . Mehtar had his own bodyguards numbering over 2000 and there was no regular army of Mehtar; there was one British army unit along with two guns which was stationed at Chitral. They had built a new fort a mile west and up of old fort which was besieged. Chitral levies thus perform the duties of border military police as well. Border military police was a

system organized initially by the British after the annexation of Punjab in which originally the local tribesmen were task to perform the duty of manning the border with the tribes and mainly to stop their wrath in their own area. It was run on silladari system under which the local headmen produce the manpower and horses and get the pay as well; it was later abolished and the same tribesmen were paid directly by the state,. A assistant deputy commissioner in each district except Kohat was the head of this police. By 1903 it had 2300 strength.

British garrison which was stationed at the Chitral amounted to two infantry regiments, , one company of miners and sappers, one section of two guns. A line of communication was opened from Mardan through Malakand, Chakdara, Dir via Lowari to Drosh ; it was the responsibility of Khan of Dir to keep it open in his area for which he was given subsidy as well. Dir Levies were raised in 1897 for this purpose they were under command of the Khan of Dir. Similarly levies were also raised at Malakand known as Malakand Levies. This garrison was annually relieved utilizing this route. It was only in 1936 that the first ever relief using motor vehicles was utilized, the road from Chakdara was vastly improved by then still Lowari had to be crossed on foot. RAF from 1929 onwards started providing air lift and in 1937 an aerial relief was carried out in the

winter when passes remained close. Chitral Levies initially had to look after the three post namely Ziarat, Mirkani and Arandu

Princely States of India

Chitral , Dir, Swat, Amb, Kalat were princely states , there were very few such states which became part of Pakistan and where frontier Corps was employed or which became part of it thus it is pertinent to have a brief look at the overall political system of India. There are two terms, one India and other British India to denote the present day Pakistan, India and Bangladesh before 1947. British India encompasses all the area which was previously under the British east India Company and after 1857 came under the jurisdiction of Queen Victoria and British parliament headed by Prime minister. The parliament appointed a viceroy normally for tenure of six-eight years. Within the cabinet there was a India office headed by a secretary of India, it was he who was answerable to the prime minster on India. It must be noted that for foreign affairs of Great Britain there was a foreign secretary also but he had no jurisdiction on India. In India the viceroy was the last word on all affairs, he had a commander in chief of army, a secretary of foreign affairs and other officials. India was divided administratively into Provinces which included

Bombay{Sind was part of it} Bengal, United Provinces and after 1849 the Punjab; within which the NWFP was created in 1903 but it was not at par with other provinces as it was directly placed under the viceroy due to its strategic position.

Apart from provinces there were over 560 princely states of various size and population, the big states included Hyderabad Deccan , Jammu & Kashmir. Gwalior, Baroda to name few. British gradually moved westward and in this process certain states were annexed like Oudh in 1852 which became a province and many other were left at their own on certain conditions the paramount being , not to indulge or support anti British military campaigns. These states were ruled by princes, although all the states had different titles like raja, rao, nawab,thakur, nizam to name few but British all classified them as princes. Thus ‘ **British India**’ denotes the area which was under British administration in form of provinces and ‘**India**’ represents the princely states. 122 states were directly ruled by the central government from Calcutta {Delhi became capital after 1911} in other over 400 states there were political agents who were responsible to the provincial governors, commissioners and deputy commissioners. **Tribal Areas** were different from the other two misnomers of India and British India and they remained so till the last day of raj. These tribal areas mostly on western frontiers but also on eastern and

northern frontiers were directly under the viceroy, the political agents were carefully selected and till 1930 all were British. The political agents were responsible to the foreign office of India. In case of NWFrontier the political agents communicated in the same pattern to the chief commissioner, the first governor of NWFrontier was appointed in 1935. Baluchistan itself was another adjoining political agency south of NWFrontier . The princes of these staes were given subsidy and were allowed certain gun salutes depending upon their importance. Viceroy was authorized 1010 gun salute where as the Nizam of Deccan and maharaja of Kashmir were entitled 21 gun salutes most of the princes were entitled nine gun salutes. States were allowed to have a militia or army with British officers overlooking the affairs. Honorary ranks of lieutenant to general {very rarely} were bestowed upon the princes, states had their own flags and were not bound to follow the British legal system as enforced in British India rather own cultures were followed.

Indian Army and British Army in India also represent two different segments of the army. The regular British army regiments had a tenure of duty in India spanning over five to seven years, they had exclusive all British ranks.; they were known as British Army in India. The standard army which took its birth with the BEIC comprising of British Officers and native

other ranks was known as Indian Army`. Native officers were given commissioned after First World War. Indian Army had its own commander in chief; there was some discrepancy among the allowances of both armies. It was in 1907 that a new corps was raised known as frontier Corps mainly responsible for the Western Frontiers of India & British India. Ironically there were few princely states on the western frontiers they included Kashmir in the north followed by Nigar, Hunza, Tangrel, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Amb, Tank and Kalat in south. A new concept of military was introduced comprising of Militia, Levies, Scouts, Rifles, Border Military police supported by regular army.

Politically the administration was run on bureaucratic system with precise instructions and protocols to follow. The officers who were inducted in the district administration were either inducted directly through the competitions or from regular army; again either on recommendations or through examination. These officers were allowed to retain their army ranks and were also allowed to automatically enhance their prefixes of rank in accordance with the routine promotion of officers in army. Thus Major General Sikander Mirza one of the very first Indian to receive his commission from Sandhurst in 1920 was inducted in foreign service and posted as political agent when he was captain but despite remaining in civil service he still

changed his rank when ever his seniority was promoted in army, he finally became a defence secretary of Pakistan in 1952 and then a governor general and finally he took oath as the first president of Pakistan in 1956. Suzerainty over British India & India from 1857 onwards rested with the crown Queen Victoria was proclaimed as Empress of India in 1876 followed by King –Emperor Edward VII, the title Emperor was meant for India.

Princely states were organized into presidency {Madras} Residency{Kashmir, Deccan} and agency. These state agencies dealt with the princely states , the North Western Frontier Sates Agency looked after the princely states on North western frontier, down below was the Baluchistan Agency which had the {Kalat, Kharan, Las Bela, Makran}. One distinct feature of this western frontier was the creation of political agencies on the same footing as for princely states to deal with the tribes , who hitherto never had any central authority to submit. Political agent in these tribal agencies had the same position as other political agents rather they were the pick of the pick, personally interviewed by the viceroy which mainly was in the form of the evening tea with viceroy and vicerine.

This whole composition and relation between the princes and suzerain remained as per royal protocol based upon century old customs. Ironically the layout of

the states was such that British India did not had any direct contact with the Afghanistan , Iran and China. The tribes inhabiting these tracts were free men in every sense. They were not savage like the African tribes with whom the white men first had contact. The tribes on the eastern frontier were different in every sense from the western tribes separated by a thousand miles. The eastern frontier was jungle with Burma as the neighbour, weather tropical with torrential rainfall , swamps and weather based water channels , jungle full of wild life. How civilization penetrated is still a mystery as when they were discovered they were living and are still living in the old Dravidian jungle way of life. Humid weather gave them dark skin, short height, fragile body and a culture basing upon nudity. Burma was eventually annexed with British India after the Anglo-Burmese wars

Chitral Scouts were raised in 1903 on the recommendation of the political agent Captain McMahan. At that time Chitral, Drosh, Chakdara, Malakand, Drazinda and Jandola in South Waziristan were the only places in agencies where there were British regular army battalions stationed. That speaks itself of the importance of the Chitral, Dir and Swat agency. This agency differs from others in many ways, its importance was not due to its militant culture rather

due to the Russian threat. The strength of British garrison at Chitral had been reduced to one infantry battalion along with sappers and a section of artillery. This strength remained at Chitral till 1942.

Chitral State Scouts were raised as classical militia; comprised entirely of local population which will trained only for two months a year and rest of year perform their normal task. This is what Machiavelli had propounded in 15th century and it was adopted in Chitral in entirety.

Strength was 1200, which means that this number will be given training, they were called for training and manning of post in batches of two hundred for a duration of two months each year. They were provided with martin snider rifles but were not allowed to take home, two British officers remained in command. Headquarters were at Drosh where a fort was constructed. Pay and allowances were shared by the political agent and the Mehtar Shuja Ul Mulk was also installed as the honorary commandant of Chitral State Scouts, Shuja remained in this honorary position till 1936 when he died after a rule of 41 years. Thus his stint as honorary colonel commandant spans over 33 years the longest in Pakistan's military history. It is a continuity of history that traditionally the Mehtar is installed as the honorary colonel commandant, in present day Chitral Scouts as well, presently is the colonel commandant. This

CSS acted more as a border police than as a militia however its primary task was to protect the British officials at Chitral who were acting as a listening post. Mehtar meanwhile initiated a programme of openness; he was invited and visited Calcutta in 1899, at Peshawar vice regal's Durbar in 1902 and at Coronation Durbar at Delhi in 1903. Mastuj and upper Chitral including Laspur and Yarkhun were made part of Chitral territory with Mehtar entering into a pact with the natives in 1909.

On raising the initial batch of scouts were given extensive training in drill for which the drill instructors from the regular British army unit stationed at Chitral were borrowed. Firing was the main thrill for the recruits if they can be call recruits. Air was informal and so was the routine. Polo was a major attraction in the evening when the scouts would show their prowess. Watching them play polo was a treat and lesson in war itself, fearless gallops after a ball the control over the ponies and coordination between the hand and eye while galloping speaks volumes of military traits; it was a question of only harnessing these .

Chitral Annual Relief- 1904

Since the 1895 the regular British battalions were stationed at Chitral their annual relief is part of classic military history. Regiments stationed as far as Bangalore

were moved to Chitral. Some regiments were required to adopt route march till a railhead and then to Nowshehra, where as the relieved battalions had to march from Drosh till Nowshehra. In most of the cases the relieved battalions were stationed at Abbottabad after their tenure at Chitral. The Peshawar Division was responsible for the conduct with general officer commanding required to be physically present at Chakdara for the whole duration which took ten days both ways. Political agent of Swat, Malakand & Chitral was responsible for the local provisions of grain. Ice camps were also established on the advice of medical officers. Scale of ration and equipment was also altered; for troops going to Chitral were authorized to have three pair of shoes and two pair of socks , importantly great coat was also issued individually otherwise at normal stations they were authorized 33 coats in one infantry company. Followers were also allowed to have 20 seers of luggage and they were issued one pair of socks apart from the No.3 Shoe.

Third Afghan War 1918.

The war itself was not focused on Chitral sector, this sector differs from all others in a sense that it is inhabited by non Pathan tribes who do not share the common language with rest of combatants of the war. However purely from military geography the Amir Amanullah of Afghanistan had much more chances of success here in Chitral than anywhere else. Chitral in the

summer of 1914 was a peaceful garrison, the lone infantry regiment was stationed at Drosh, and Chitral Scouts itself had only one company in the summer to train with or for manning of the posts. May has been a month of almost all major events in subcontinent thus it was in May 1914 that Amir Amanullah broke his relations with British India because it had delayed in accepting his kingship and more so politically to have the public support in his favour which is so vital in country like Afghanistan and what better way than to have Jihad; tribes became electric with the prospect of an all out war against the infidel British. Mehtar of Chitral also received one such firman from Amanullah on 8th May 1914 through the military governor of Afghan Asmar province Brigadier Muhammad Usman Khan; Mehtar Shuja Ul Mulk rejected the offer and kept his side of pact with the British intact. It was a very wise step of diplomacy. Afghanistan after 1893 had carried out an all out massacre of the Red Kafir or Broghul driving them into the Chitral Kafiristan. Majority of the kafirs had accepted Islam and were known as sheikhs moreover the Kafiristan itself became Nuristan in Afghanistan. The war bugle was sounded and Chitral prepared itself for an attack of Afghanistan.

Chitral Garrison comprised of 1/11th Rajputtana Regiment with 450 bayonet strength it was commanded by Lieutenant colonel F.C.S. Samborne who was also the

commander of all armed forces in Chitral which comprised apart from his regiment, a company of sappers and section of guns ex 23 mountain battery, along with 1000 scouts of Chitral; they had been called up for the service. Chitral State scouts were being commanded by Captain Crimmin with Lieutenant byres as the sole British officer.

Chitral was divided into eight districts each under an 'aatlique' responsible for collection of revenues and also head of the local scouts, it was his responsibility to collect the men for training and sent them to the Drosh . Under every aatlique there was a 'charwelo' responsible for a group of villages within a valley, each village itself had the Baramush the head . It was the Baramush who was the first ladder of the Chitral State Scouts organization. Now these aataliques gathered the trained men . Chitral Scouts were under the political command of assistant political agent Major N.F. Reilly who started mobilizing on 5th May 1919.

Company of scouts was initially deployed at Galapach six miles downstream of Mirkani, aim was to keep an eye on the Arandu pass. Mehtar on the other hand had sent his various sons along with his body guards on various passes also. Initial Afghan movement started from 12th May onwards, they captured Arandu and soon the Scouts position at Galapach was over ran by 600 strong afghans, scouts retreated to Mirkani.

Afghans were certainly moving forward with an aim to capture the Mirkani and close the Lowari Pass.

Clash at Mirkani.

On 14th May Major Reilly along with two companies of Chitral State Scouts arrived at Mirkani from Drosh. The retreating scouts were also harnessed and together these three companies put up a courageous attack on the Galapach position and reoccupied it; fighting continued the whole day. In another classical display of fighting the scouts along with 50 men of Mehtar bodyguard under command Major Reilly put up another attack on the Kauti feature which was across the river and source of permanent irritation for the Galapach position the objective was achieved with in hours on 16th May. Afghan strength at Arandu was estimated to be over 600 supported by four artillery guns and a large tribal lashkar, apart from Arandu the Afghans were in control of Bashgal and Birkot valleys

On 21st May 1919 in the overall plan the one company of Chitral Scouts were amalgamated with the Mehtar's bodyguard in an attack on the above mentioned positions. Two companies of Chitral Scouts under command Lieutenant Byres of Scouts pressed forward on the right bank and two companies on left bank under their commandant. Subsequently Byres moved forward , on 22nd may he had a temporary bridge thrown over the

river in which the scouts were expert in doing so, byres move ahead to face Afghans at Darshot but to his dismay they had vacated the posts before his arrival.

Battle of Birkot 23rd May 1919.

Almost entire British garrison at Chitral was present at the battle of Birkot, a small town inside the Afghan province of Asmar where the bulk of Afghans were concentrated. Battle opened up on 23rd May at 0700 hours with own artillery opening up, the Rajputtana and Chitral Scouts carried out the advance and by 1400 hours the Afghans started retreating from Arandu. Afghan resisted was mainly in the form of sniping. Chitral scouts lost eight men and another 23 were wounded. After the action the afghans started reinforcing themselves thus the political administration of Chitral very wisely decided to retreat back into own areas thus the two companies of Chitral State Scouts were left at Mirkani Fort and remainder took position inside Drosh Fort along with other elements . On 3rd June 1919 the armistice was signed between the British India and Afghan government. However the situation ay Chitral remained precarious with Afghan General Wakil Khan planning to move into the Chitral thus two companies of Scouts and few men of Mehtar bodyguards wee stained at Ayun and one company was also sent to Lotkoh valley. On 17th July 1919 an Afghan attack came upon Bambouret Valley via Zanor Pass and advanced to a mile of the

Bambouret Village. Afghans had a complete control of all passes starting from Zidig Pass in the north to the Brambolu Pass in the south. Lowari Pass was also threatened by 500 odd Afghan tribesmen with menacing posture towards the Ziarat post. Lieutenant Byres with two companies of Chitral Scouts physically attacked this conglomeration of tribesmen and pushed them back. The situation in Chitral started coming back to normalcy after signing of the treaty at Rawalpindi on 8th August 1919; thus ended the first blood of Chitral State Scouts from which it emerged as a victor. *Three scouts were awarded with posthumous award of Indian Order of Merit, one with Military Cross, one with Distinguished Service Order and two each with Indian Distinguished Service Medal and Title of Khan Sahib.*

More importantly the concept of Scouts in Chitral so different from the other militias proved a success. Unlike North Waziristan Militia and South Waziristan Militia along with Khyber Rifles where mass defection took place, there was not even one defection among the ranks of CSS. Being entirely composed of one qaum it had its own advantages which proved so good in this conflict.

Reorganization 1930.

. Chitral State Scouts had strength of four and half companies at the beginning of 1930. Pay in 1930 was

as follow, a Subedar was getting Rs 50/ per month where as a Havildar was getting rs15/, a Naik Rs 12/ and sepoy rs 10/per month. Ration allowance was given at a rate of Rs 9/ pm, the subedar major apart from his pay was given an annual allowance of Rs 25/. Clerk was a highly paid trade with a pay of Rs 120 per month, armourer was paid Rs 45, religious teacher was getting Rs 10, and gardener was being paid Rs 9 per month. The strength of Chitral Scouts was as follow, eight subedar, 32 havildar, 32 naiks, 64 lance naiks and 736 sepoy. There were four chowkidars as well who were being paid at Rs 15 per month, there was a pupil teacher also.

The Mehtar who was knighted after the third Anglo-Afghan War , his subsidy was also increased and above all he was entitled to 11 gun salute now. British thus in an effort to lessen the financial burden upon the state undertook the proposal to reorganize the Chitral Scouts in this background. There were 9 companies of Chitral Scouts at the end of the 1919 but these were gradually reduced and by 1930 there were six companies which were further reduced to 4 companies under the Chitral Scouts name. The reduction was carried out after a detailed study. Each company had four platoons with two subedar, eight havildar, eight naiks and 200 temporarily naiks or soldiers. Thus each subedar to command two platoons or half company with a havildar designated as platoon commanders. The subedar and

havildar were bound to undergo one additional month of training apart from the one month which they were supposed to undertake with their company. Each company itself to undergo one month training. On the financial side a reduction of 109 men all ranks was carried out. Companies were named as Lasper Mulikho company, Turikho company, Mastuj company, Kuff Company and Lutkoh half company.

Chitral retained its strategic position; in 1936 the Gilgit agency was leased over by the British India from the Kashmir state for a period of sixty years. Gilgit Scouts thus came under the control of Frontier Corps and a greater interaction took place between the Chitral Scouts and Gilgit Scouts. The annual Shandur polo tournament was basically a clash between these two rival scouts outfits.

A road was greatly improved between the Chakdara and motor transport was used for annual relief till Dir. Commander in Chief paid a visit to the Chitral and Chitral Scouts in 1936. The road move was a tedious and dangerous manoeuvre with constant air support and piqueting of the route. Dir Levies were up to the task. Air relief was carried in the winter of 1936-37 when aircraft taking off from Risalpur would land at Drosh within an hour. Heavy pieces of artillery were flown from Rawalpindi which included 3.7inch howitzer. For seven years Mehtar Nasir ul Mulk reigned Chitral and

in his tenure the Chitral opened up a little bit towards the Afghanistan in terms of timber trade.. Mehtar was an enlighten ruler having served with a British regiment for an year , he was the ideal; he politically united Chitral with Dir by marrying the daughter of Nawab of Dir. Mehtar Nasir ul Mulk was given the honorary rank of major in the British Indian army.

1943

In 1942 the last of British soldier left the Chitral for they were required at more important places due to fortunes of second Great War which at time was placed heavily against the British. The strength of Chitral scouts was increased to 10 companies with an addition of one section of 2.75 inch Vickers machine gun. The strength was first increased from four companies to six in 1935. More importantly the scouts now came under the control of Frontier Corps for technical purposes. The political agent of Dir, Swat & Chitral Agency still retained their control but now the posting of officers became a FC affair rather than an military. The first fruit of this was the training of Chitral Scouts troops on the machine gun which was provided by the instructors from Tochi & SWS ; moreover native officers of Chitral scouts had to spend three months either at Tochi or at SWS to learn the fine tricks of frontier warfare . Overall the Chitral Scouts still retained their individual flavour from the other corps of FC; they maintained their one qaum

recruitment and also the unique system of mobilization and one month training.

1947.

The political history of Gilgit and Chitral is almost interwoven, in 1947 when the question of accession of states to Pakistan arise there was a feeling among the ruling elite of Chitral to be interlink with Afghanistan more than with Pakistan basing upon the geography but the 3rd June 1947 plan had left no option to the states but to choose either between the India or Pakistan. Mehtar Muzafur ul Mulk .. had good relations with Quaid and Chitral acceded to Pakistan in August 1947; Gilgit had a different story. Mehtar Muzaaf ul Mulk died in 1948 and his son Saif ur Rehman who was already recognized as the Mehtar by the British India took over. It is worth noting that almost all the mehtars { Shuja ul Mulk, Amin ul Mulk } had the Afghan bloodline running from their mother side. Saif's mother herself was daughter of an afghan refugee. Let it not be forgotten that all mehtars trace their lineage to Sangin Ali a Persian thus the Persians cultural influence is even to day visible in the form of courtesies.

Chitral sate was in almost chaos after the death of the Mehtar Muzafar, traditional plots to snatch the power were put into lay. Mehtar Saif himself is partially responsible for the anarchy that ensued. In April 1949

the bulk of administration including the wazir-e-azam , commander in chief and chief secretary were all arrested and properties confiscated. This was a real crisis for Pakistan as Afghanistan was always ready to exploit any weakness in the frontier states.. By September 1949 the crisis were over with the intervention of political agent Malakand.

In **October 1949** crisis of another kind erupted when the marriage party from Dir which had come to take the bride; daughter of late Mehtar Nasir ul Mulk as per earlier agreement. They were informed by the Mehtar Saif Ur Rahman that he himself has married the lady in June 1949 but did not disclosed to the people; this set the stage for a civil war between the Dir and Chitral. Saif was later evacuated by air from Chitral and sent to Lahore to undergo training in civil services academy. It is worth mentioning that he had already received the military training from Pakistan Military Academy in 1948. The state was now put under a board of directors' with assistant political agent as head. Chitral at that time had governors in what are tehsils now. There was a governor at Drosh another at Mastuj under the accession of 1947 the states retained their administrative set up as it was before accession. Saif later had a tragic end, he died in an air crash over Lowari in 1954 while he was coming to Chitral after years of wandering; all due to one fatal mistake of heart. He was

succeeded by his four year old son Saif ul Mulk with political agent Malakand as the regent. This royalty was finally abolished by President Zulfikar Bhutto in April 1972 when government abolished all such titles and privy purses. Just for historical fact the India had abolished all these princely states privileges under Indira Gandhi in 1971. Presently the Mehtar is a traditional title which people generally respect in the valley. Mehtar is presently living in the old fort on the banks of river Chitral.

The Kashmir Operations of 1948

Soon after independence, the force was called upon to move and stabilise the situation in Guraiz (Astore Sector) and Skardu valleys where Gilgit Scouts under command Col. Hassan Gilgiti was retreating. The enemy had made considerable advance across Burzil Pass. Chitral Scouts relieved Gilgitis in Kamri and Domel Sectors. Some of the posts established by Chitral Scouts in Shaqma Sector are still known as Chitrali-1 - Chitrali-2 and Chitral Soon (Tower). Chitral Lashkar under command Capt. Mata-UI-Mulk moved to Skardu viz Deossai plains and facilitated the capture of Skardu. During this battle 2x3.7" How sent by Mehtar of Chitral were used. The Lashkar also succeeded in capturing 250 POWs including an Indian Lieutenant Colonel Sher Jang Thapa.

Asmat Wali's diary. Nursing assistant baba Asmat wali died in 1988, he took part in Kashmir Jihad of 1948 , more importantly he left a diary of the account. Distance from Chitral to Kamri was 420 miles which they covered in 38 days, Asmat on 20th December 1948 notes in his diary ' saw Pakistan currency at a shop , Government of Pakistan was written on the currency note'. He also notes down the change of command at Gilgit Scouts where Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Jan was transferred and Major Tufail took over the command of Gilgit scouts. Asmat also mentions the Indian counterpart Colonel Suba Lal Chand who according to him was a shrewd man. But the most touching part of his diary is the account of an old woman in Mini merg , a rich widow who sacrificed over twenty five goats for the scouts in four months for the scouts because they were extremely short on ration'. Asmat when arrived back as victor to his native town in November 1949 came to know that he had lost his sister in his absence she had died almost immediately when he had left for Jihad but her mother intentionally did not let pass the information to him.

His Highness Colonel Muttah ul Mulk, Victor of Skardu.

Gilgit after the freedom act of Gilgit Scouts was still under the threat of the Dogra forces stationed at Skardu and Leh. There was a company strength at

Skardu under Captain Parbat Singh as a reinforcement to the Dogra Battalion, another Dogra officer Captain Kishen Singh was holding the Tsari pass the mouth leading to the Skardu along the Indus going upstream. Brigadier Faqir Singh was the overall commander with headquarters at Kargil.

1956

Amidst such chaotic environment the training and standards of the scouts were bound to drop. The scouts all belong to the same area and ethnicity; thus palace revolts had their impact on them. Gasht and long gasht were thus a valuable mean to keep the scouts busy. By 1956 they were organized into two wings known as **left and right wing**, the scouts were now permanent body. The normal gasht was of two days and long gasht spans over ten days . Each post was supposed to have eight gasht per month each ranging no less than 15 miles. Method of recruitment was simple, adjutant would inform the Wazir-e-Azam of the deficiency in manpower. Chief secretary was in fact known as Wazir e Azam , thus he would in turn inform or order the ‘hakims’ the village headmen , who would direct the desirous young boys for recruitment. The physically standards were; age no less than 17 years, height 5.6 inches, weight 120 pounds and chest expansion of 30-32 inches.. Recruits training duration extended to 36 weeks and conducted at Drosh. There was a permanent corps

drill staff comprising of one jemadar adjutant, one corps havildar, three drill naiks and 5 drill lance naiks. For night training all ranks used to wear the boot made of skin{Kun}. At quarter guard the usual strength at day was two by six and at night two by twelve scouts. There were three quarter guards, one at Chitral , other at Drosh and one at Arandu. Drosh had an additional responsibility as well they daily had to provide a mail guard of two scouts for the protection of mail from Drosh – Mirkani.

A soldier had to be a first class shot., having a certificate of 3rd class education, should have passed the senior sepoy promotion examination and above all recommended by his wing commander, only then he was considered for promotion. Troops had a good ration , they were issued with meat thrice a week , they were entitled 11 chattaks of atta, half chattak of ghee and one chattak of daal daily. A special allowance known as khowar was admissible to the officers after they have passed the language, it valued at Rs 100 per month.

1965 War

Chitral Scouts were bit late in taking part in the war, the two companies of Chitral scouts were ordered to move to the operational area in the second week of war and by the time these two companies reported at Rawalpindi on 23rd September 1965 the war was over.

These two companies remained deployed at Rawalpindi where the threat of air borne troops from India were a distant reality. Subedar Suleiman Khan was the commander of Chitral Scouts contingent; they remained at Rawalpindi till the last week of January.

1971 War

The situation in the former East Pakistan was getting deteriorated every day and new raisings were ordered by the government. In November 1971 the commandant Lieutenant Colonel Afzal in a darbar updated the scouts with the situation and ask for volunteers , four scouts namely Havildar Sarfraz Shah alias Khamshay of Laspur, Naik Nasir Shah Bang{Yarkhun}, Naik Qadeer Khan Raman{Laspur} and Naik Khush Ahmed Khan {Murkhaw} stood up and volunteered themselves. Commandant in recognition of their patriotism promoted all these scouts to next rank before their move to the headquarters Frontier Corps. All these four sons of Chitral scouts were later made prisoner of war after the fall of Dacca on 16th December 1971. They were repatriated under the Delhi agreement {Simla} of 18th August 1973 but were able to join back with their families in December 1974. Among these Naib Subedar Sarfraz Shah Khamshay was able to air his interview through All India Radio in which he highlighted that they are being treated well and according to the Geneva Convention' I am fine and life

inside the prison is also fine'. In the end he remarked in Khowar language '*Gooshkoo Moraien Zannan Soureein*' which is a Chitral proverb meaning 'everything said and heard is false'. This seems to be the yard stick for history of Chitral as well.

Apart from these four scouts more than 140 other scouts from Chitral took part in the 1971 War on Western front at Kargil Sector. They remained at Kargil for over two years, another batch of 40 scouts performed duty at Rawalpindi garrison.

Chitrali head gear is very peculiar and the identity of the area , people and the Chitral Scouts, every army chief has worn it notably General Zia Ul haq, General Waheed Kakkar and General Mushhaarff. Lady Diana has adorned it so has Prince Karim Agha Khan. It is aptr of uniform, now a day s it more used on ceremonial occasions. The cap itself is amde of chitrali cloth and the Village Mogh near Garm Chasma is famous for its quality. Cap is made custom, taking the measurement of the head and then cap is sewn ; it is available ready made as well. In Chitrali language it si called 'Pakool'. It has distinctive background which denotes the wing colours {presently there are six wings in Chitral Scouts}. The plume is made of duck which is known as Mundhaqq in local language, it is a seasonal bird , however from 2002 onwards the use of natural feather has been prohibited keeping in view the

endangered specie. The plume now is artificial, however the original plume is known as Putcch in Chitarli language.

The cap is white in colour, which is rolled up consuming more than a meter of cloth, presently it is not issued free of cost to the scouts they have to purchase it from open market where it can cost 250-500 rupees. The Gilgit scouts have identical headgear also the only difference is in the way of making the cap, Chitarli cap is more heavy and have more twinges as compares to the Gilgit scouts ; which is bit narrow and its top cloth does not spill over the rim.

The Chitral Scouts mascot is Markhoor which is again an endangered specie now, it has straight horns as compare to the curve horns of Urial or Ibex.

Chitral Scouts Officers Mess.

The present day Chitral Scouts Officers Mess is known as Petako Gaz in chitralli language , it has a history many many years ago there was a khonza {the royal princess} who came here and left her dupaatta here and when she went back to the palace she remembered her cloak and mentioned it to her attendants and gave the direction to the palace as well, in Chitarli language Petako gaz means a place where princess forgot her veil. The present location was at one time part of Mehadr's

property and even now the national Gol park almost starts from where the mess finishes.

Petako gaz is in almost seven layers or tiers of ground which have been levelled enough to construct the building. The original building of the mess was constructed in 1903 and from then till 1990 it remained in its original shape for the reason that Chitral scouts itself moved out from here and established headquarters at Drosh and it was only in 1995 that they came back to this Mess again. Many additions have been carried out but the original design has been left intact, credit goes to the commandant for maintaining the original layout which is more or less like Swiss dacha .

The most notorious stone on frontier is here the 'laying stone of Captain Boono'. Mess presently has apart from two original guestrooms known as Birir and Rumbor almost a dozen other guest rooms and living quarters for the adjutant and one wing commander, accommodation for mess staff, signal detachment and security guards. There is a diesel generator, one hydel power which was commissioned in August 2013, gymnasium, library and Billiard room . One clay court tennis court at tier two, one squash court at tier three are also there. There is one mosque as well.

Mess has two main halls which are rectangular in design , one is used as dining room and other as ante

room having television facility; in old adys thee used to be a paino and radio followed by ardiogram.

In 2002 the guest room charges wre rupees 200 per night for lieutenant colonels and above and rupees 150/night for all others while on leave at chitarl Mess. Mess in order to aminytain its decorum usually abns the entrance of children under twelve on official functions. Chitral scouts have one peculiar issue almost all their official inspection and tour atkes palce in summer time mainly due to bloking of road movement in winter thus they have heavy load of guests in summer there fore it is always advisable to have advance booking here.

Chakdara Mess

It was established in January 1988 at cahkdadra, it cost Rupees 79,606 to do so, lieutenant colonel nayyar murad was the man behind the idea.. amount was tarnsfeed from the garden fund to the mess fund.

Chitral Scouts. August 27th, ‘Darashot’ The Longest Night.

On 27th August 2011, the Afghan miscreants attack seven different posts of Chitral scouts in Arandu – Mirkani area spread over 32 Kilometres the crow distance between them is 22 kilometres; soon after Fajr

prayers. It was the first such attack of this magnitude since 1919 and when seen in present context of war against militancy this was the dragging of Chitral into the Durand line affairs from which it has been able to keep at a distance since 1895.

The attack lasted till noon, post which acme under the attack were Ursoon, Mirkani, Domel Nisar & Langurbat with heavy fire, mortars, rocket propelled grenade launchers , all which is usual in the tribal attacks on the posts all along the front. Physical attack was launched upon the Gudigar, Darashot and Kauti. It is the pattern of the Taliban in which the attack is launched on the group of post , keeping some under the fire and attacking others physically. It creates delaying action upon the defender especially at night in mountainous terrain with very poor communication tracks .Chitral Scouts stood out the test and fought bravely holding the posts intact especially at daarshot.

People living in the area especially at Sheikhanadeh, Bumburate/Rumbur, Ursoon, jinjirate Kuh, Arandu, Chitral are relatives to each other since centuries and it they have been travelling almost adily to meet each other and carry out the chores of centuries old rituals of trade through frequented and unfrequented routes². The district administration had established the

² DCO Chitral, ltr No.2818/DCO/dated 6th September 2011.

contacts with the people living in Nooristan for maintaining peace in the area and not allowing the Taliban or hard core Islamic militants in the area; so far it had worked for almost eleven years a remarkable achievement when seen in the context of overall devastation of social fibre in the frontier and other regions of Pakistan.

Miscreants had the concentration area at Gawardesh from where they crossed into the Chitral boundaries through Pathkun Bro, Paitazom, Kauti Gol, gambiri Gri and chulugol. They were a mixture of Afghani and Noorisatni men wearing stolen NATO uniform and definitely supported by the Afghan national army personnel as one of the daed body later revealed. It is highlighted that in May same year five post of afghans were wiped out by the miscreants which afghan alleged to be based in Pakisatn. The awrning about the impending attacks were received almost a month ago with rumours coming from the lips of the travellers and the centuries old natives way of information. What was surprising was the magnitude as almost seven posts were hit simultaneously. The quick reaction forces were made ready at nodal points and wings were warned to keep an high alert and this in the end asved the ady. The four worsr hit post were Darashot, Gudibar, Kauti & langurbat.

At darashot thirteen individuals of the post including post commander embraced shahadat, yet they did not surrendered it , Sepoy..remained behind the machine gun till 1700 hours when the relief force came on the post. Attack was led by the Ghazwan and Zubair both local local miscreant commanders with Zubair getting injured aslso.; all in all 32 taliban were killed , the remaining while fleeing burnt the hanging bridge on River chitral thus practically bringing the cahse to an end. They ahd looted the weapons as well which they took it back via langurbat,Arandu Khur and dab.

Ursun Post - 2nd May 2011.

On the night of ½ may 2011 the miscreants belonging to the swat chapter attacked the post which was held by 30 Scouts of Chitral at 0200 hours , miscaenst were in strength of 20-30 who had infiltrated through the Paith Zom Pass and gambir Gri Pass to cross the frontier and then used Banjal to reach the psot. The initial plan of the miscreants was to attack silently but they were discovered by the alet sentry and that resulted in exchange of heavy fire. Five rockets fired by them landed inside the post, this fire duel continued for another three hours before the miscreants were forced to fled. The miscreants while fleeing attacked one post of

border police and took away eight SMGs alongwith three policemen of border police as hostage. The spot is inside Pakisatn border around 4 miles aerial distance but it requires almost equal number of hours to reach by foot. Miscraenst were believed to be part of faizullah Group³.

Zhang shall abduction. 28th November 2010. On 28th November 2010, eight men were abducted by the afghans while they were cutting woods , they abducted eight oodcutters and left one with the message taht zhang shall belongs to them and no wood cutting is allowed . later all the wood cutters were released who narrated taht they were atken into gawardesh in afghanisatn where the abductees simply got tired of feeding them and thus left them one by one. The woodcutters were also not tat simple rather trey were hired by the locals for wood cutting and had c ome to thea are on vehicles.

Afghans arrested , 2nd June 2010.

Athanis of Bhumbirit .

Kafirs of Kalash claims to be descendent of Greeks and it is very much possible also because Alexander The Great after his retreat had divided the India into two of his lieutenants who remained in power for another three hundred years . The Way to Oxus from Indus or vice versa has to pass through the Kafiristan;

³ DCO Chitral Letter No.4225 dated 1st October 2010.

not necessarily the Chitral River. Thus Greeks or Hellas as they call themselves now have developed a cultural heritage with them , it serves both as Greeks is also looking for something to revive its old glorious history and Kafirs looking for more attention. They have developed the museum, water supply in the Bhumbirit which is the largest of Kafir village, community toilets and few other minor things. Mr Lerounid Athanasius was one such person who was living in the village since 2002. On the night of 7/8 September 2009 at midnight, two men overpowered the Head Constable Zafar who was there as part of security to Athanasius heading four men. It is worth mentioning that not before these policemen had ever any policeman stayed a night here because of the police. They at times would close the police station at sunset hand over the keys to the local headman and then come back in the area. Zafar died when he hit the ground ,other two policemen were injured and Mr Athanasius was taken away. Chitral Scouts platoon under the command of Major Naseeb arrived at first light , all bridges and tracks leading to Afghanistan were sealed, border police was alerted and local jirga was called and addressed by Major Naseeb. Residents of Bhumbirit, Ayun, Urtsun & Birir serving in Chitral Scouts were sent on leave to gather the information from the villages..

The first lead came from nor Muhamamd a local who disclosed that he had provided mules for none Afghanis ‘ I was going from my village Otak banda to grazing ground at Waler Banda with my mules when i encountered a dozen Afghanis along with a person wearing a chadar moving under their protection they wee climbing up, the man with chadar was walking with a stick other wee carrying weapons, one an told me rather ordered that he is their officer pointing towards the man wearing chadar and i should take him upon on my mule , i reused and was taken along on gun point...after some time my donkey also got tired and i was ordered to carry the officer on body which i did..later i really had to touch their feet to let me go which they did. It was Ramadan and they were eating and offered me the same but i declined. I had talk with them and asked about the person , they narrated taht they have abducted it from Bhumbirit and in the process had killed one policeman also, they had wrapped the bombs around their body and i think even the bag which they were carrying was full of bombs’. One cannot ascertain the truth of this but it was certain that they adopted the Parapit Pass route to reach Patti Gol. Commandant Colonel Rizwan Rafi visited the area and held the jirga and was of the opinion that local residents of Bhumbirit & Shekhandeh are involved. Three parties of local wee sent to Nuristan on 10th September comprising of local jirga members for release of Athanis, one left on vehicle

via Arandu-Birkot route the other two on foot via Zingoor Pass.

On 2nd October 2010, the jirga came back with three letters from Athanis ,Mr Athanis wrote a letter which was delivered to the Chitral Scouts in which Athanis wrote ‘ i am fine here until today..Taliban demands 20,000 US\$ and freedom of their prisoners’. Two of the messengers sent to the local Taliban leader had an unfortunate accident as one was killed when NATO aircraft bombed the area and other was seriously injured. Mr Athanas was later released by the Taliban and a function was held at district co-ordination officer office to distribute the prizes .

Rescue at Lowari, 10th March 2001, seven persons were rescued By Chitral Scouts who were going for eid leaves on foot all belonging to Lahore they have come for sightseeing.

1969, The last years of Chitral State

In 1969 President General Yahya Khan with a stroke of pen took away all the privileges of the Chitral, Dir and Swat States and amalgamated these into the

main stream administration, from hence on there was no difference between the District Sukkur and Chitral. At that time the road between Dir and Chitral was closed over for six months due to snow and it was fit for 3 ton lorry till Lowari and from there only one ton truck was able to reach Chitral. Road Drosh-Madakhlahst and Kirinj-Garamchashma were under construction {they are operational now}. PIA flights were random and sporadic depending upon the weather which was mainly cloud at Lowari, only two towns were of importance Chitral and Drosh. Pathan controls the trade in state was the observation of Chitral Scouts in 1966, Pathan were mainly immigrants from Dir State or Bajaur, Gujars were another strong group which was reflected by the Chitral Scouts ‘ they rear sheep and cattle’⁴.

State was governed by the Mehtar who was assisted by a political agent and Wazir-e-Azam who was appointed by Government of Pakistan, justice was administered by the judicial council appointed by the Political Agent, but cases other than the revenue are hear by a panel of judges called ‘ Mizane Shariat’ headed by Qazi-UI-Quzat. State was divided into two administrative districts Chitral & Mastuj with Drosh, Lotkow & Chitral tehsils forming aprt of Chitral district and Mastuj, Torkhow and Mulkhow forming tehsils of

⁴ The Frontier Corps an introduction, published by Frontier corps , 1967, pp, 90-95.

Mastuj district. Each district was headed by a deputy commissioner and each tehsils by tehsildar, due to excellent peace environment there was only one superintendent of police having headquarters at Chitral. State imposed taxes on opium, charas, woolen patti, timber which in fact were the real products of the state as agriculture was enough to meet only the bare existence and most of food grain was imported from Punjab. There was 1/10th of agricultural revenue taken as Zakat or ushur.

Songohor a sample Village.Chitral, 12th September 2013

I have just arrived back from Songohor the village of Lance Naik Nazir, after spending the night there; presently I am in the mess having a cup of tea and enjoying the weather, which has drizzled.

I went yesterday morning at 0900 hours, Nazir went with me to the Adda which is at the end of Shah Bazaar opposite PTDC Motel, the Hiace goes only when it is full, the scouts with me ensured that I should get the front seat but it was occupied thus I got into rear. The principal of centennial school was also on board, finally coach left at 1000 hours, weather was hot.

I had travelled on this road way back in 1995 and it seems as if nothing much has changed as far as the scenery is concerned but now it is metallic road till

Booni. A hydel power is also under construction at Gowazi almost 25 kilometres away from Chitral. My interest now was to follow the siege of Chitral relief force, which came from Gilgit, and to see the area from that perspective. The scenery initially is rugged very narrow and then it opens up however the mountains on the roadside are muddy and kacha with plenty of landslides at frequent distances. Within the coach a lady in burqa and an old man were sitting behind me and when I stole the glance through driver's mirror I realised that she is quite pretty and quite absorbed in the area, she at the end again put on the burqa. The journey to Booni took almost two hours, we changed direction along the River Yarkhun at times on east bank and at others on west, bridges mainly wooden planks one odd was pucca, I have to think where probably only at Chitral.

Valley has one similar pattern, it opens up and then closes again opens up and then closes, plenty of greenery and trees, on the far bank that is opposite to the road the mountains are barren rugged and it seems there was a road or track in old days because one can make out the track and few abandoned habitats in the form of stone shelters. Agha Khan University and school at Reshan, the government college building short of Booni, the hydel power staff colony, which is well guarded and well lay out, are few of the interesting places enroute. Speed of coach was quite high and scary in nature.

Booni is different from Chitral, I got down at the bazaar instead of Adda where Nazir's brother Amanullah was waiting, mobile phone service works here at Booni, I had a easy load and then got in touch with the Amanullah, we had to wait for an hour for connecting coach towards the Songohor. I spent the time waiting at the electric shop; I was surprised to see so many electric gadgets shop selling freezers, microwave oven, electric kettle and washing machine. I enquired about the sate of electricity not much better than the rest of country rather a bit better but the shopkeeper said that people like to buy and more over if one has bought anything the other will buy it even on a loan. This I have heard before as well.

After an hour the Toyota land cruiser two door was ready for travel, I got the front seat, the seat was broken, driver a very young boy and vehicle had diesel filter clogging issue which creates a power surge at climb, a dangerous proposition but I think none of the passengers were aware of it, I kept my eyes on the road, driver and mentally ready to jump at any instant. The number of students were quite high on the road with very high proportion of girls, most of them were wearing all green uniform dress with white duppatta, I later came to know that theses are private school students, same holds for boys wearing shirt, tie and trousers, college boys were wearing white kameez shalwar, over all an open

society which is enlightened, girls were talking with males and enroute driver also picked another female student. For me coming from the Khyber Agency it was quite a pleasant change. I forgot to mention about the headgears, in the coach from Chitral-Booni I saw one pathan man wearing traditional puggri, here many were wearing Chitrali cap but equal numbers were without it and very very few were wearing the white colour including myself.

The track is the same that leads to Mastuj and in pathetic condition, muddy, landslides, narrow and at times it opens up, We stopped at mid point to put water into the radiator there were two three other jeeps also. Soon after an hour of drive we hit the track from where we diverted to the right and below to cross the river, a very narrow track very steep and then over the wooden bridge across the river, a vast ground then steep climb and we were soon into the village, I paid the fare for both of us {rupees 300 in total} from Chitral to Booni it was 150/. Now the walk in the village started, narrow stony path with medium level walls on sides, fresh water flowing, thick vegetation, trees laden with apples of all kind green and red. We walked and walked and it was all uphill when we soon hit the open patch where under a walnut tree I saw an old man sipping tea which was being brought to him by a lady probably his wife but logically should have been his daughters; Amanullah

told me he is the war veteran for whom I have come this far. We kept on walking and soon reach the end of village and there between a narrow path was Nazir's house, on one side his living and on other his baitahk. My main worry till now was to find the washroom, I thought whether they have western system or is it in the open. This is a major worry in strange places and very dangerous one because it takes minutes in mountains before you get stomach upset.

As we entered into the annexe or baitahk what a scene, green small lawn, a three room barrack and fruit laden trees, there stood two children, one boy of ten and a girl of four, both dressed very nicely and clean, expecting the guest. It reminded my own children and me of Skardu who were exactly the same, the house and scenery is same with High Mountain behind the house and green lawn. Children very well mannered, very friendly and very neat in nature and dress. I also admit that in these almost thirty years of military life this is the first time ever that I have visited a soldier's house, Nazir's father is a retired subedar major of 38 Frontier Force regiment, his brother has just passed masters in commerce and his internship will start from Monday at Booni in bank. Overall the village reminded me of Spanish village at potes, the Scottish highlands. Half the lawn was basking under sun rays and we sat in the shade of apple tree, I pluck one apple and eat it, what a feeling

it is, other factor was the washroom which Amanullah showed me and that took all my worries away, I just sat and played with children while Amanullah went for the lunch, I was hungry because I had not eaten anything since morning and it was now 1600 hours.

The valley which I have travelled so far and the place where I stood now is different in one aspect, it is away from main track and on the far bank thus historically and geographically more isolated than the one on the main caravan route. The Booni Valley Pass starts from here, the mouth is very narrow and it is only recently {30 odd years} that the track has been widened at the base otherwise the centuries old foot track is visible on the mountain. Songohor village is at the mouth of the glacier, which is quite long and steep and ends up at Twin Mountains, which are snow covered; their peaks no less menacing than the K-2 only altitude is the difference.

Soon the son of Nazir brought a pitcher, towel and a bowl, I being a socialist declined this but than under the cultural heritage I washed my hands. It is a beautiful thing of culture, which teaches the future the importance of cultural values a typical central Asian culture. Then both went inside and brought two slavers of dishes. I before coming here have been talking with the mess junior commissioned officer in charge about the local delicacies and he promised me to prepare on my

arrival back, Nazir have been listening all this. There was Polai the bread made with yeast and swollen. Ghalmandi, the fried pieces of bread slim one, having the fresh cheese in between, Darshki, which is a mixture of eggs and flour; it was good. Shank, which is a curd, made from the boiling of lassi, it is in small pieces and looks good. Sanawajee which is the only thing having any spice thus it is more favoured by me, it is nothing special but mixing of flour with the local masalas and only now one understands the importance of spice trade route.

Despite all my hunger I could not eat anything but simple bread and sanawaji, not that the other foodstuffs were not fresh but may be they were too fresh. The dairy products of each area, valley differs from other thus the taste of milk is also different; I somehow cannot take any dairy product other than that of my own village. After a cup of tea, which was sugarless because in these parts especially in Chitral they do not take sugar; but sugar was present in a plate. We set off for the veteran Nadir who was still sitting under the tree but there were two additional chairs also put there, I occupied one and Amin who also acted as the interpreter did other.

The children all sat around, there was only the spring water flowing melody, the walnut tree had a big hole in it and I enquired about its age and got the nodded affirmative. There was sun and there was shade also, in

the close by distance was few fields having the sunrays falling in the middle and brightening up the already cheerful environs. Few women {two} were standing at rather far distance out of ear shot but looking after the grazing cows which numbered equal in strength in addition to the young calf.

Bit of silence as I absorbed the beauty and in any case you do not just go and ask the veteran a question, in most of cases it takes bit of time to understand each other especially for me to start the question, in this case when I asked him, when were you enrolled? And got a puzzled look, it became obvious that he does not understand Urdu thus Amin asked the same and that is how I got it. I could understand few words and thus makes out the whole purpose, old man like so many others do not use hand signs frequently. Nadir was enrolled in 1945 in Chitral state Scouts at Drosh and in 1961 got his retirement papers from Drosh too. During 1947-48 Kashmir War he was part of artillery battery, it took nine mules to carry one howitzer. They moved through the Shandur pass towards the Gilgit amidst the snow and extreme freezing temperature; they had very little warm clothing with them as it was promised to be supplied at Gilgit. Nadir and the Chitral scouts remain committed for another seven months. Nadir highlighted that the Chitral states and Chitral Body guard fought the war separately. Nadir was deployed at Guraish with his

guns for another seven months before they were pushed back. Nadir used to get Rupees 2 only, mainly for purchase of milk, although the pay then was rupees 22/ but Nadir like all other men got it after coming home, in case of nadir it was rupees 400/ quite a sum in those days. There was little ration and insufficient warm clothing at the front. Captain rauf was in charge of the gunners, Major Mohiuddin who was the brother of Mastuj governor was in charge of the scouts contingent, thus in a way the princely family of Mehtar were all engaged actively in the liberation of Kashmir. For ration Nadir went out on hunting and hunted markhoor, they ate the meat, preserved it, presented the head to the officer in charge and made shoes and coat out of the rest; this is how nadir started living as the son of soil. For trouser the army issued blanket was made. Nadir hated the trouser but it was made compulsory to be worn by the officer in charge ‘ thus I would put it on for his pleasure and parade and would quickly changed into shalwar’. During the operations the Indian Air force attacked many times and it was in one such attack that two scouts embraced shahadat, ‘ we would rush towards the cover as soon as we heard the aircraft noise’.

Nadir stayed at the front and then pulled back, on our way back the mule got buried under snow and it was only after the winter that it was retrieved as it was

having official issued items on body, which were the cause of many enquiries.

I had nothing more to ask from him so we bid farewell and had a walk of the village, myself, amin and his cousin who was in early thirties along with one teenage boy. We walked calmly and slowly through the paths made of stones and reached the outskirts by following the fresh water upstream, soon we reached the fresh water fountain head, it was enclosed by a stone hedge and inside fresh water was oozing out.

Amin narrated me the story about how all this place is the property of one man, Ziaart by the name who pretended to be made when the water channel was being made, he would throw the stones into the dug out channel and finally the people left it up as a bad joke and from that day Ziaart is acting normal and now own the channel, amin showed me the house of ziarat later perched on the edge of the channel a good house.

Amin also narrated how the flood on 27th June 2007 played havoc here in the village, I did not paid any attention to it taking it as a flow of glacier in summer but I was bit alarmed as the village being old should not have gone through this tragedy.

I asked Amin more about that flood as we walked through the stoned paths in the village, meantime scanning the two women rather one woman and other

grown up girl looking after their grazing cows and lambs. I further inquired about the livestock in the village and came to know that few keep goats, as they require more attention rather lamb is the preferred pet, cows are there which are smaller in height. Amin told me that initially the flow of water in the village stream started increasing then overflowing and soon the colour also changed into mud but none paid any attention, then all of sudden at night the water rushed and the thundering noise of stones being crushed and hurled was frightening which did not allow people even time to save their certificates of education, by this time we had reached the house.

Little girl was playful in mood and rolled on lawn, crawled under table and generally amused everyone. Amin's father Amanullah also joined in and we talked about the apples and pears. He also highlighted the flood, the earth close to glacier just opened up and started creeping upward this lasted for over three days, only one portion of village was affected badly the other mildly and remaining untouched. The water and adjoining stones took away many old walnut trees, according to him in his life and neither from his old people he had seen or heard anything like that happening in village, best part is that they did not attributed it to any sin like Gomorrah.

It was now almost dark and soon the pale light bulb brighten up clearly indicating the low voltage but soon it was normal and we moved inside the room, There are two amin big rooms, one washroom with eastern commode and other was closed probably a store, these two room are at two ends of veranda. Inside it was typical native culture with carpet on ground, cushions at the wall and one bed with bedding on it. The hand carved table mat and cornice cover indicates the artistic mind of probably Nazir's wife. I sat t one corner feeling tired and wanting to sleep, my muscles were aching but I had to sit, we had aglass of Chamrock which is a local juice of apricot, it is thick and has its own sweetness ideal for summer, the only draw back with it is that when taken for first time it can upset your stomach, I had taken two glasses and was now waiting for the result. Another feature of mountain or native food, water and bread is that it creates air in your stomach, you need to pass it out otherwise it can create lot of stomach pain. Now all these are culturally taboo issues but they are reality in deed. I soon change into a kameez shalwar which I had brought with me and also handed over the last of shawl to Aman, it was a brown colour male size and I had kept it for myself but now I feel that I have to present something to this old subedar, he was reluctant but happy and I was more than happy to present it to him, my only regret being that I had nothing for the children.

Soon another friend joins in he looked like a genuine atbleeghi and was quite interested in my talk. I came to know that Ismailis are in majority in this village and all sects were living happily till 1970 when on fateful day Maulvi Obaidullah made such an inflammatory speech that since then both sects are hardly on talking terms with each other, needless to say that moulvi himself was assassinated after two years. My mind arced towards the assassins of Hassan bin Sabah no doubt looks like their work or trademark. Another round of food despite all my resistance, rice but without the showering of walnut oil, chicken, turnips, bread, and again the cheese filled chapattis, it was too much but I had to eat it. Then came fruit and finally the beautifully decorated custard, which I was unable to eat. I resisted tea or green tea, promised them that I will take the fruit with me in the morning along with the dry fruit, the walnut oil which I was looking for last two months was finally there. Every valley has its own cooking pattern but not long ago everything here in Chitral was cooked in the walnut oil, which is distilled in the house. But now the dalda or other oils have taken over still walnut oil has its own charm the way olives are to Mediterranean the same way Walnut oil is to Chitral and apricot Oil to Skardu, surprisingly there is no Apricot oil here. The walnuts of this village are quite famous because of their size, they still need another a month before they are fully ripe and then the outer green shell bursts open and then

you have to shake the tree to get them on ground, at times even strong wind can do this job for you. A good tree fetches around 80 kilogram of walnuts which the buyers from Chitral takes away by paying almost one third of the price on which they sell at the end. It holds true for apples.

I had a peaceful night and was up at the fajr prayers remembering that the first vehicle from village leaves at 0600 hours. I sat out side in the lawn and watched the sky, it was still full of stars and soon the first sign of darkness going away appeared. Oh I forgot to mention the moon which rises from the mountains behind the house {just like Skardu house} and when I saw it last night it was probably of tenth day and beautiful to stare at. Now at dawn the birds chirping started coming into ears, the village has over four mosques and equal number of Jamat Khannas. I pluck one pear and enjoyed its freshness. Amin and Aman both came and I sat with the father talking about the village he told me that there are over seven different types of clans living in the village. Meanwhile the breakfast tray came in by this time I was really getting wary of food and complained joyfully that I am leaving this place mainly due to this excessive food which I have to devour where as I would prefer a fresh fruit here. I had to drink tea and eat few pieces of paratha.

I asked the old man about the castes in the village as who stitches shoes that does haircutting. The strange thing is that no particular caste exists in the village for such professions as they do in Punjab. This creates another problem how to classify the people according to their trades. Thus here in this village which is an old village probably in existence for centuries there are seven types of people who live, two categories namely Hishaey and Achanjay along with Ghonomein are the oldest who were always engaged in hardship, hard labour and beegar, then Raza Khel, Syed, Zoonthe, Paksheer or Yashaey are the other castes. The highest caste is the Nawab or ruling class that there is none here in village although the old caste the rais who were ruling it before Kator are probably exists close to village. Ismailis and Sunnis both belong to these classes.

Now the question comes in how this village evolved, it were the Ismailis who advanced from the broghul towards the down south and at one time they overthrew the Kafir clans the original inhabitants of this valley the original Aryans. They then accepted Islam or the line between these two was at the Booni Valley. With the passage of time the incursion of Muslims or Turks from the Arandu valley put the Sunni sect in firm footing and it was then finally under Shuja ul mulk in 1926 that a wave to convert the Ismailis forcibly into Sunni started which lasted for a bit but still itsremnants

can be seen. Today very few Ismailis openly confessed their sect; this is what I learnt from the Carey Schoffield the principal of Major Langland's School at Sinhur Chitral, she is of the opinion that majority of the Ismaili teachers simply do not want to answer the question about the sect. Ismailis according to Aman Ullah do not offer the Friday prayers, on another question about the fair and festivals in the village, the standard Muslim festivals of Eid are celebrated and Ismailis also celebrate Nouroze which falls on 21st March every year. Now we started walking towards the intended jeep, the regular jeep had gone early and now a relative of theirs will drop me across the river at Perwak from where I will catch the jeep for Booni. I enquired about the graveyard in the village and was surprised to know that there is no community graveyard here, it used to be but feuds have now forced the people to bury their dead in their own lands. It is all due to scarcity of land.

We bid good-bye and Amin the brother came with me in the Suzuki jeep, which had been converted, into diesel till Perwak. In the way it was still not seven o'clocks, I noticed small boys carrying school bags and coming from the other part of river wearing shirt and tie. There were girls also quite grown up wearing all black uniform carrying books in hand. There is middle and high school for girls in the Songhor village, which is a government, owned that is why the uniform is black.

Perwak has only middle school. We got down at the parwak and waited for the jeep to take me to the Booni. Quite a number of students were walking or waiting for the transport. One has to admire the spirit of parents and children in seeking knowledge; these young boys and girls walk almost three –four miles one-way uphill and downhill one way everyday to gain knowledge. The girl's student while passing said salaam to all standing. Soon I got an old jeep CJ-5 to take me to Booni. It is an art to get into this jeep, you have to climb and then squeezed through the rods to sit, I had a rearseat, journey was uneventful, I dosed off many times, but the ever present risk of jeep going down is a reality which kept me on tenter hooks. We were seven people in the jeep, two students, three going for some judicial work, two of family probably going on medical mission.

At Booni, I had a shave and meanwhile I had put my bag into the waiting Hiace and when I acme out I saw the Hiace moving out and soon it was gone, I was furious and had all kind of names for these Boonis but then I saw that my bag is now placed in the next waiting coach, it lessened up my anger. The coach left ftera n hour, I had a rear seat and every now and then the driver will stop to carry an errand for someone at Chitral, it is how things work here, letter to post, something to purchase and some small item to give to someone. Seat was uncomfortable, day hot but later it drizzled, coach

traversing at high speed, the constant yaw and kind of roll all put together makes this an uncomfortable ride. I again tried to grasp as much of the geography as possible. Valleys are narrow then open up then again closes down thus each encompassing a separate identity and this is how it was three centuries ago. I arrived back at Chitral at 1200 hours, got the taxi, which charged me two hundred, rupees and I was back in the warmth, hospitality and comfort of mess, nothing can beat it. Had a cup of coffee, thanked Nazir for all his hospitality, received a call from Khyber rifles and then went off to sleep.

Chitral, 11th September 2013

Saturday & Sunday 14/15 September 2013,
PetakoGaz , 1825 hours.

The Genearl officer commanding the 17 division Major Genearl saanUllah Kahn Niazaï has embarced shahadat at dir today ; he was hit by an IED while he was going abck after spending the nihght at drosh. It awns only on Friday evening that commandant and myself were sitting in the mess alwnwheni came to know that he is coming by helicopter to visit at langurbat post. The officers were busy in making out the approaches and

atke off pattern of helicopters while I just remained on listeninig post but what I gathered was that programme of general is subject to weather and if it is bad then he may land at drosh instead of Langurbat. I have never met him , I was scanning the pictures of the Chitral scouts with the photographer nazir on Saturday at the office and it awas only then I saw his pictures , I had been mistaking him for Colonel rizwanrafi but that awas major Genearlsanaullah, giant ofa man and today at noon I heard from the colonel in charge of the military intelligence about the incident, colonel was going to the mes to hear it on private channels. This si the asd end of the general .

Weekend has been productive, I scanned the pictures on Saturday with Nazir , I still have a feeling atht he has hidden certain pictures folders but I think I have enough for the bok especially the polo pictures are good. Later I hada tea with the naikRabnawaz from Morkhow at phupokhanGurzain, he corrected me that Ratnei does not mean acfearther it is small lawn. He also highlighted that his language khovar is the more correct version and it is heavy for others , I agree with him. The Term Chitrali is as confusinga s the term Britsih, in that case it encompasses English, scott, Irish and welsh. Same holds true for the Chitarl, it is nota ethnic group rather a acongolmeartion of six mountainous satestes which are presently the tehsils of District chitral. In one

of the pictures which was taken in Mastuj in early fifties the governor of Mastuj is wearing a pagri which is more of Dogra style than the pathan pattern. Now this is very pertinent lead as the governor always wears correct official pattern of the native state dress but it clearly indicates the absence of chitarli cap and thereby indicating an alienship of governor. Similar pattern was narrated by the naik also over cup of tea. His father is a retired subedar from FF, a brother was shaheed in Kargil he was serving in Azad Kashmir Regiment there. He himself was initially enrolled in police but later his father pressurised him to join either army or Chitral Scouts and now he is a driver here. At Phophokan which means children in Chitrali I saw an old man who looks mentally unstable. I was told by the driver that he was enrolled as a gardener by Colonel Murad in 1986 and since then he is living here doing small errands, he is always ready to fight if any one makes even a gesture towards the Chitral Scouts vehicles or men. The standard of park and the accent is outstanding, it is certainly among the top ten parks of army in Pakistan. The atmosphere so peaceful with the river Chitral flowing just feet away, you can enjoy the waves and currents of water following under the bridges while sitting on a bench and sipping coffee. The bakery makes excellent and fresh cake, rusks, pizza and rolls apart from samosa and kebabs. The other adjoining park is the Chinar or maple gardens it is on the east side of road

which separates both parks, old gigantic trees with vast umbrella of branches practically covering the whole lot of park but taken this is the beauty of it, ample sitting places have been created by having wooden benches, I saw a shop in which a person was making something on enquiry it was revealed that he was making the samosas for the park, he offered me to have samosas but I pended it which I am now regretting. There are two bridges, and these parks are adjacent to the new bridges but as one walks few yards the old bridge and road is hit, this bridge is now unbarbed due to its structure I believe but more due to security, next to it is the Murad's mosque built on the River, one of the most beautiful mosque in Pakistan almost a replica of old Jhelum mosque but it stands out in terms of its design, architecture, location, colour and beautiful rose garden.

On the way back we stopped at the Chitral polo ground which is at the east end of Ataleeq Bazar opposite radio Pakistan and PIA office, a beautiful scene, long elongated uneven green ground which is ascending towards the south, over a dozen polo players were playing and equal number of horses were being made ready astride the ground. Over a thousand men were watching the game, on the far end the women musicians were playing harmonic melodies which indicates the goal and the signature tune of the player attacking the shoot is played, sun as not very bright, rather cloudy in nature.

We ast at the northern end or the bazaar end, two old pavilions are still in use alongwitanewerone , the palyers and orthes were just sitting there.

An interesting ady , it was Friday and i wanted to close the ady important thing to do aws to get the pictures of the mounted infantry and the boards of the digffeent appointments. So i was up by the first light , ok bit excaggering make it second light but i went with Major Kazmi and Capatinn faizan alongwith Major arbab. Typical mounatind morning , little bit of rush in the bazaar and then we were in the fort but this twenty odd minutes drive was enrichening, the discussion or arther i joined the conveastion when Major Kazmi brought the subject of village defence committees and i enquired about them.

Today was the interview day with three or four officers waiting to be interviewd by the commandant. Typical apprehensions and anticipations of the officers, one goes back year backs when i also went through the asme anxiety , to get the house , to get the hut, and apprehensions . Thus it all is very enjoyable and on the other thand one thinks of how time passes so slowly in military life but ina sense it is the beauty of the system ; but it can bea drawback as

well. I got the sketch made by the mlanche Naik Zahid of the education cadre , an excellent effort beautiful nd according to my desire. I took the pictures of it and many other maps of the area and chitral scouts and the Afghanistan. Then i was lucky to get the commandants briefing from major Kazmi with whom i am having more informal relationship-ps i am admiring his qualities. I acme to know about the incident at Ursun a couple of years when over 22 Scouts alongwith the three policemen and levies were killed by the attack through Arandu by the afghans, centuries old pattern; thus i was interested in knowing this nimporatnt episode in the history of Chitral scouts the worst night of their history. Maenwhile one C-130 was scheduled to come to Chitral as the pilot of the aircraft had informed the adjutant on mobile . Heard Sindhi in the adjutant office as one officer an ex 5 Light Ack Ack alongwith his wife herself an army doctor acpatinn both belonging to the Hyderabad were sitting for interview and atlkking in Sindhi , waht a sound waht a feeling to hear it at chitral. Comamnadt then ahd to leave but the Photographer Nazir had taken his pictures and had completed all taht required from him. I now waited for the file on occurrences which ahd the detail of the the Ursun incident.

The headmaster of the school acme and gave me the essays written by the students but the best news was fro the tailor who praomised to give me the shirt by noon , the work non commisioned officer also showed me the hand woven cloth taht was being waeve for me. Took some pictures. One interesting fact taht has emerged from the adjutant briefing is the Denzing hall which iahad heard from Major Siraj Ul mulk, it is behind the phokopan Gurzain. I got the albums from commandant offices nad also the file but after giving a piece of mind to the clerks . It seessm quite in order with some of these clerks. While coming abck i wanted to get to the photographer because my sixth senses are warning me about these tarddemen. In the room a pleasant surprise in the form of the shirt , waht a feelingwhat a cloth, so light yet so warm , soft in nature very light. I agin went back with the Major kazmi after having smokea joint to get the photographer. In the way i found the ctalk most intoxicating.

Kazmi narrated taht theyv given the weapons to the Kalash people after two of their men were killed but they refused to take it stating taht they do not require it and they trust the state

for their protection. Secondly in another village the villagers gave it after

Injigan is the western most valley of district Chitral, its literal meaning in local dialect is 'prosperous'. On its east is tehsils Mulkhow, on west Afghanistan, north Hindukush and in south is Chitral Town and tehsils. TirchMir the highest peak of the Hindukush is situated here, near Karim abad, Rokhon is the second biggest peak situated near Village Sainak, people calls TirchMir as the abode of fairies.

Injigan is divided into three valleys namely Karimaabd, Urkari & Garmchasma. Weather is extreme in winter which blocks almost all ground routes due to heavy snow, spring starts from April onwards. Lotkow is the other name for Injigan, River Lotkow is the largest river of the valley which originates from Kotal Doawra and joins River Chitral near Chitral airport. River Bagosht, Othrai, Gol, Urkari and Karimaabd stream all joins in River Lotkow before it terminates. The river is famous for its clear water and trout Fish. There is mainly one crop in Injigan except in Bahtooli, Shigoor, Momi, Mough and Mardan Koh. The best grapes are produced in area Mough which are distilled to make local wine. Injigan has many other peculiarities but it is the presence of natural sulphuric warm water which is available year

around; it is this which makes the Injigan as the most neat and clean valley in whole of northern areas especially when in other areas people seldom takes bath in winter. Mough is famous for the Chitrali patti the hand woven cloth. Urkari valley is the most under developed area of the Injigan, there was not even a jeep able track till 1983. Potatoes of Injigan are also very famous and in great demand. The very first person to be enrolled in Chitral Scouts in 1903 was from Yoft, Shaib Ali Lal son of Khokhan Baig, he later rose to the rank of subedar major the very first subedar major who was a non Kator⁵ he retired in 1932. Sultan Jawan alias Manoor, is another brave son of soil who took active part in the Gilgit War of 1947. Sultan Khan Murdaan was born in 1924 at village Murdaan and join Chitral scouts in 1945 and took active part in 1948 War as Bren gunner, he embraced shahadat 40 kilometres short of Srinagar in a hand to hand fight with enemies. Another stalwart of the area and of 1947 war is Islam Shah who retired as naib subedar, he was enrolled in Chitral Scouts in 1932, he died a natural death in 1990. Ghair Dum Shah Chaweelo who has died in 2002 was another brave scout of Chitral.

Injigan has a predominant Ismaili sect adherents, there are Fatimid also who are regarded as the non .

⁵ Muhammad rahim, tareekh Injigan, hafiz , chitral, 2006, pp, 16-58.

The cultural history and heritage of the Injigan is heavily inspired by the Tajikistan, Badkhashan, Yarkhun, Kashgir which is a logical conclusion of the valley being as the entrance into the Chitral valley. The Jinan China utensils are a speciality of the area which used to come from the Kashgir and china; they were almost unbreakable and above all had the uniqueness to point out the poison in food thus these were very popular with the ruling class. Silver Mushraba also comes from Faizabad in Afghanistan and are given as dowry utensils. Kohkan Baigi si the name of extra large big Deg which were imported in thousands by the prince Kohkan Baig and hence it carries his name even today. Ghaan is another utensil which is made of walnut wood it si big in size the smaller version is called Langri. Tong is a vessel used for keeping milk, lassi and curd, it is the smallest of all utensils. Ghorī si the equivalent of Madaani which is used for making curd out of milk.

In terms of weapons a sword is called a Khonghar, it is very thin at the edge and in old times it was always dipped in poison water before the battle. Shield is known as Khaari, Bow & arrow are called Dhoorwan – Weishu, Nairang is a battle dagger worn around the body. Dumpla was a firearm using cartridge and Dumpla por and Rupal are rather the basic forms of firearms.

The weighing measurements are also different, Batti si 2 ½ kilogram, Kondak is ten kilogram, Beera is 20 kilogram, wara is 60 kilograms. Aichamoot is smaller than an inch, Dasheet is smaller than a foot and Hoost is larger than a foot but smaller than two feet.

In terms of dress the Injigan is famous for woollen cloth, caps for male and female are both made here, female cap is colourful and a must item for the bride known as 'khoi suak'. The woollen floor mat is known as 'Pelsibick Koreek'.

Chitrali months are related to the culture for instance February is known as urian for the birds {duck} that arrive here, name of adys are as in Persian, Shaanba, Do shaanba ...etc.

Chitral & its inhabitants.

All Chitralis are not same there faces, colour of eyes are different and so are their customs and traditions, however the language and religion is the biggest binding and after it the Chitral Scouts bondage is the most powerful institution in the Chitral.

Bashgali

Also known as Shekhandeh, these are converts from Kafir religion into the folds of Islam willingly. They constitute almost 1.5% of Chitral population. They

are settled in Bhumbirit, Birir upper valleys like Ghayor, Langurbat and ginjearit. They are also immigrants from Afghanistan, previously they were known as Red Kafir and were living on the western Kafiristan but after the 1895 Jihad majority of them embraced Islam, even now whenever any Kafir accepts Islam he is known as sheikh. Family life is compact and a normal family comprises of 15 odd members including the three generations living together. Male enjoys the polygamy and women works in the field, in short their cultural and social life has not been affected much by change of religion.

Gowari or Aranduni .

The inhabitants of Arandu are a different class mainly due to lying on the gateway of caravan and traveller route thus they are an amalgamation of centuries, a mixture of Afghan and Kafir along with the Mughul and Turk. They comprise of three small clans, first is known as Sinyari which had roots in Asmar and believed to have migrated here almost 500 hundred years ago. Sultana is the second group which have roots in Jalalabad and probably came here almost eight generations ago, third clan is known as Afghani or Swati these have roots in Swat and adjoining areas, one of them lives here at Arandu and other at Domel Nisar who are known as Damiri. The Damiris are located almost 30 miles north of Arandu valley known as Domel nisar, they constitute almost 1% of Chitral population.

The clan has two sub clans, one known as Shuntri who claims to be the original inhabitants of the valley the second clan is commonly known as mere Swati or Afghani . They are nomadic in nature and have different residences for summer and winter.

They all share same language which is different from Chitrali and share same cultural values. The highest crime ratio in terms of murder and other crimes occur here mainly the revenge and blood vendetta. Their living habits are different the construction and design of their houses are tailor made for the blood feuds, high walls , narrow entrance and small windows. They carry weapons openly and fire jubilant aerial rounds for celebrations, minimum education institutions are located here.

Tangiri or Dangkirk

They live in south of Chitral in the valleys of Ishrat Pindari, comprising of almost 1.5% population of Chitral they speak a different dialect known as Phulwar which is known as Dangkirk in local terminology. They belong to the mountainous clans of Gilgit and surrounding areas and as such share the similar mountainous cultural similarities.

Gujar.

They are literally the Cow herders, they are nomadic in nature and move with their herds depending upon the weather. Mostly residing in Swat, Dir and Kohistan area, majority living in Shis Kohistan south of Chitral, their language is similar to Punjabi, they are quite clever in their dealings, mostly uneducated.

Wakhi or Wukh

They occupy the north eastern part of Chitral in Boroghul area, population not more than three thousand. These are migrants who entered Chitral from Boroghul Pass. One clan is known as Wakh or Wukh they are Afghans in nature who moved over from Wakhan area. Second clan is known as Sir Quli, these are Tajiks and then those coming from Chinese Turkestan {Sinkiang} they are known as Ghazis, collectively all are known as Wakhi and they speak a dialect which is different from Chitrali. Average elevation of the area is in excess of 7000 feet with pass towering at 11000 feet, the Wakhis are almost 200 kilometers north of Mastuj, their life is as primitive as it was thousand years ago, people still use horse, mule and donkey for travelling, there is no road or school other than one run by Chitral Scouts Wing. Due to high elevation and extreme temperature there is hardly any cultivation here and people depend upon the animals for their survival, they prefer to shop or barter their necessities of life from Gilgit region.

Badakhsi or Madaklashti

These were invited from baadkshan {Afghanisatn} by the mehtars for the reason taht they were expert in amking weapons from iron, they now reside in south of chitarl in area /valley known as madaklasht thus they are knwon as Madaklashti, they speak Darri or farsi language , they still have the customs of Persian culture. But now they have aamlgamanted with the Khowar culture.

Manji or Manjani

They live in Garmchashma in Lutkhow Valley in villages like Para Beg, postki and sipohat etc. They also have Badkshani bloodline as they migrated from a place in Badhshan {Manjan & Yamgan} they speak Yadhka language which is an old Persian dialect and these people have preserved it despite adopting the local culture in totality.

Pathan.

These are mostly living in south of Chitral , some of them are also in Mastuj area and in chitral city as well. The tarde is in their hand, they speak their own language and generally remain aloof from the natives.

Chitral Scouts Officers Mess.

The present ady Chitral Scouts Officers Mess is known as Petako Gaz in chitrali language , it has a history many many years ago thee wasa khonza {the royal princess} who came here and left her dupaatta here and when she went abck to the palace she remembered her cloak and mentioned it to her attendents and agve the direction to the palce as well, in Chitarli languge Petako gaz means a place whee princess forgot her veil. The present location wasa t one time part of Mehatr's propery and even now the national Gol park almost stars from where the mess finishes.

Petako gaz is in almost seven layers or tiers of ground which ahve been levelled enough to construct the building. The original building of the mess was constructed in 1903 and from then till 1990 it remained in its original shape for the rason taht Chitarl scouts itself moved out from here and established headquartsr at Drosh and it aws only in 1995 that they acme back to this Mess again. Many additions ahve been carried out but the original design ahs been left inatact, credit goes to the commanadnst for aminatig the original layout which is more or lessm like Swiss dacha .

The most notorious stone on frontier is here the 'laying stone of Captain Boono'. Mes presently has apart from two original gusetrooms known as Birir and Rumbor almost a dosen other guest rooms and living quarters for the adjutant and one wing commander,

accommodation for mess staff, signal detachment and security guards. There is a diesel generator, one hydro power which was commissioned in August 2013, gymnasium, library and Billiard room. One clay court tennis court at tier two, one squash court at tier three are also there. There is one osque as well.

Mess have two main halls which are rectangular in design, one is used as dining room and other as ante room having television facility; in old days they used to be a piano and radio followed by audiogram.

In 2002 the guest room charges were rupees 200 per night for lieutenant colonels and above and rupees 150/night for all others while on leave at Chitral Mess. Mess in order to maintain its decorum usually bans the entrance of children under twelve on official functions. Chitral scouts have one peculiar issue almost all their official inspection and tour takes place in summer time mainly due to blocking of road movement in winter thus they have heavy load of guests in summer therefore it is always advisable to have advance booking here.

Chakdara Mess

It was established in January 1988 at Chakdara, it cost Rupees 79,606 to do so, lieutenant colonel Nayyar Murad was the man behind the idea.. amount was transferred from the garden fund to the mess fund.

Culturally women enjoys a high esteem in the society , there are instances of women being appointed a governor during the reign of Aman Ul Mulk, furthermore even Shuja ul mulk was married to a widower. they follow own traditions in marriages etc, like most of Patahn tribes here also the groom has to apy for the marriage expenditures including the clothing of bride. There was a time when the chitral was a hub of white flesh trade but it is no more there. Chitral is facing a dilemma of social values , the majority of men from lower areas prefer to get married here , since 1995 more than 270 cases of marriage outside Chitral has been taken into the courts by the local organisation in which it was revealed that only 350 marriages have taken place within the family rest all were outside the family in which the groom had paid the amount and move away with the bride.

The very first girls school was opened in chitral in 1936 known as Anglo Vernacular high school

Chitrali head gear is very peculiar and the identity of the area , people and the Chitral Scouts, every army chief has worn it notably General Zia Ul haq, General Waheed Kakkar and General Mushaharff. Lady Diana has adorned it so has Prince Karim Agha Khan. It is apart of uniform, now a days it more used on ceremonial occasions. The cap itself is made of chitrali cloth and the Village Mogh near Garm Chasma is

famous for its quality. Cap is made custom, taking the measurement of the head and then cap is sewn ; it is available ready made as well. In Chitrali language it is called 'Pakool'. It has distinctive background which denotes the wing colours {presently there are six wings in Chitral Scouts}. The plume is made of duck which is known as Mundhaqq in local language, it is a seasonal bird , however from 2002 onwards the use of natural feather has been prohibited keeping in view the endangered specie. The plume now is artificial, however the original plume is known as Putcch in Chitarli language.

The cap is white in colour, which is rolled up consuming more than a meter of cloth, presently it is not issued free of cost to the scouts they have to purchase it from open market where it can cost 250-500 rupees. The Gilgit scouts have identical headgear also the only difference is in the way of making the cap, Chitarli cap is more heavy and have more twinges as compares to the Gilgit scouts ; which is bit narrow and its top cloth does not spill over the rim.

The Chitral Scouts mascot is Markhoor which is again an endangered specie now, it has straight horns as compare to the curve horns of Urial or Ibex.

Chitral is full of myths which mainly comprise of fairies , there are Muslim fairy and Kafir fairy, there is

deaf fairy and then there is Kahngi fairy which is an ally of housewives against their enemy fairies {Kafir & Deaf fairies}. For males there is a 'Gor' a jin who is neither male nor female, the feet are turned way around with fire streaks coming from fingers. The 'Boona Jin' comes out at night, his power is in his cap, anyone who gets his cap becomes his master. There are no less than half a dozen fairies which are part of Chitral cultural life.

In terms of superstitions the Chitralis are no better than any other people and centuries old superstitious are still in vogue. If anyone comes across a fox while setting course for a journey then it will be successful however if a shikari comes across a rabbit then he is doomed. If the right ear is getting warm then rest assure someone is talking good of you and opposite if the left ear starts getting warm.

Chitral's history is interlinked with the **history and geography of Dir, Swat, Gilgit** and Kashmir apart from Kabul. In other words The tirch mir, Naga parbat, Rakaposhi, K-2 are inter connected, one can view the same in terms of Mehtar, Nawab, Khan, rais, Maharajja and political agent. It is also a conflict & cooperation between the Hindu Kush, Karakorum and Himalayas.

The area east of Chitral encompasses Kashmir, Swat, Dir and east Turkistan and their interaction in last two hundred years have set the stage for present and to

some extent the future of the area. Geographically the area between the river Gilgit and River Chitral can be taken as one entity and it was one entity as late as 1850 when the Gilgit was under the Meharr Aman ul Mulk. Swat was not a state as yet then, Nawab of Dir and Kahn of Jandol were two other strong contenders of the suzerainty but the Hindu Raj mountains kept them at bay, it was the Aarndu Pass which remains open year around and provides an easy access to the Pothohar and Affghans to venture into Chitral Lower. Upper Chitral remained almost independent even during the reign of Aman ul Mulk, it had the visitors from the west passing over the Boroghul Pass and settling into the villages of Tor khow and Morkhow. The Lutkhow the western area of Chitral had the Afghan or Tajik travellers coming across the mountain ranges via Sahh Salim Pass. In nutshell, Chitral's passes provide the gateway to the northern parts of India, Kashmir and now Pakistan. Boroghul can be rightly called as the door to the Kashmir. Even now the population of Boroghul hops over the Darkot Pass to have the supplies bought from Gilgit traders rather than coming to Mastuj or Chitral, because the distance involved is quite less at Darkot.

A Convoluted History of Chitral.

After almost a fortnight and with excessive studies, interviews, travelling and observing I have reached certain key notes about Chitral. The people as a

thumb rule do not talk about their history and when they do talk it is nothing more than what is written about Chitral by the Chitralis which primarily revolves around the princes or royal history; something very similar to England.

Primarily there are two distinct river namely the Yarkhun and TirthMir or Lotkow which confluence just a mile upstream at Chitral, the rivers which are joined by many small tributaries which all are fresh water glaciated water or spring , compartmentalises the state into varying valleys but mainly the north & south. Religiously people of Chitral have Kafir among them and there is no logic not to believe that majority of population at one time was Kafir. The upper Chitral is predominantly Ismaili by faith and lower Chitral is Sunni. Upper Chitral have influence of Tajikistan, Badkshan and Pamir where as the lower Chitral is under the influence of pathan culture or Kunar culture which creeps up stream through the Chitral river. Historically there were two major ruling dynasties the rais which were ruling Chitral from 1000 -1530 AD and Kator which through a coup d eta came into power in 1530 AD, it coincides with Mughul rise to power and kators as such are linked with the Mughuls. These two ruling classes have bitter and bloody history trail like all other princely houses all over India or for that matter in world.

Socially the society comprises of the ruling families known as adamzads, arbabzads come next in ladder followed by the fakir & maskin. This is the issue as no one will admit that he is from lowest rung. Then there is religious factions and persecutions; as late as in 1926 when the Mehtar carried out an all out effort to convert the Ismailis living in upper Chitral into sunnism, it happened after his hajj. The persecution was stopped only after the intervention of British political officials.

The 3000 odd Kafir living on the southern bank of River Chitral are another enigma, they at one time between 1000-1300 AD were powerful rulers of Chitral although no unified command yet they have a history of standing up to the Mughuls and later to the Afghans, however in the end they were almost exterminated in 1895 but managed to hold on to a narrow strip of land in lower Chitral. Majority of these Kafir embraced Islam and are known as sheikhs in society. Their women still stroll the Chitral bazaar wearing colourful attire hardly anyone can point out a Kafir man as he wears no distinct dress item.

Headgear is very important as is seen in all along Durand Line, Chitralis wear white headgear made of Chitrali Patti, Swati also wears the same design and so does Gilgitis and even Mahsuds wear the same kind of headgear with minor design and wearing pattern. A Pathan seldom wears this headgear he has its own white

skull cap in summer, Gilgiti cap is similar in cloth but it is smaller in circumference and it does not have the cloth hanging out from the edges as in case of Chitralis. There is only difference in cloth as far as the Swati is concerned and also the colour, Swati wears rather grey colour.

Drosh, I have finally made it here, left the Chitral Mess at 1400 hours luckily Captain Fayzan came to mess on a defender and he was going to langurbat so I got the lift from him, he was rather embarrassed that I am sitting in the aer but this is how the army life goes but I do appreciate his concern.

Drosh is a magnificent fort, built in 1939 on a higher ground which overlooks the whole valley, at this place the Chitral River is joined by a small river coming from the north; Madaglasht, which is a predominant Persian speaking valley comprising of few villages with ne odd Chitral Scouts post. On the back of the Mess and the fort, {mess is at the edge of the fort on the higher slope} there are two piquet's of British era, one is known as the Domeil named after the village which is down below and other one is known as azeem piquet namedafter some one which I have to trace.

Mess service is poor by any standard, I had the lunch comprising of mutton karhai, very ordinary cooked with trace of lamb smell, salad again just average rather

poor and now waiting for a cup of tae for half an hour without any trace of it. Otherwise a classic mess by design and style it is almost a replica of Chitral mess in the colour and design. One small corridor then ante room on left and dinning hall on right with kitchen adjacent to dinning hall and billiard room/library adjacent to ante room. It is all in wood, which makes it so special. Good silver and trophies, everywhere it is reminding of Lieutenant colonel Murad Khan, I was thinking about him while sitting next to waterfall as why he committed suicide, was it something in the air or the area, maybe after spending few nights here I may understand him better. It is 1700 hours and sun is still setting its rays on the corner of mess and that speaks of the people who selected the place and designed it to have maximum sun in winter. It is much peaceful than Chitral, no more noise of motorcycles or busses only the constant melodic rhythm of water fall but after short time it also looks like a mental torture. Lot of greenery and flowers, roses are still in bloom, lawn is well manicured. Only three nights ago Major General Sana was staying the night here without knowing that it is going to be his last one. By 1725 hours the sunrays have left the mess building, it is cloudy anyway.

Drosh covers the approach towards the Chitral and Madaglasht, the River Chitral flows at its base {Drosh Town} and runs for another fifteen miles before

making a right turn towards the Domel Nisar- Mirkhani-Arandu to enter the Afghanistan. In this way Drosh is the key fort, the base depot. Occasionally the snarl of a donkey rips through the silence and add a bass to the water melody to which I have become useful. To this is the added noise of football being hit hard. They play football every evening. The mosque ahs just called the faithful to the prayers. Electricity is the same as anywhere else, selected timings, which are generally abided by, but it is poor in watts, the generator than supplies the power.

Fort is narrow from inside and vehicle cannot reach mess, one has to climb a dozen stairs to reach it.

Drosh Killa.

Drosh is on the southern bank of River Chitral and Drosh Fort popularly known as Drosh Killa is on the northern banks of river Chitral, why the fort was not made on the southern bank is obvious when one looks at the area, The River Chitral is in fact a pass which leads to the Chitral the ancient caravan route was on the southern bank whose remains can be seen even today thus the fort was constructed primarily to keep an eye on the route and also to guard against the Dir insurgents.

There are two forts in Drosh one is known as Chitarli Fort and other as Drosh Killa, the former has been turned into a school as back as 1937 while other

remained as headquarters of Chitral Scouts for almost fifty years till 1992. Piquets are another enigma because they are only on the north and east of Fort. The fort is large, big, magnanimous and simple in construction, it is in tiers and have solid walls which are now broken and replaced with abrbbed wires. Originally there was only one entrance into the fort on the western side having a piquet it si disused now; a pity. There are two rings of fort , one which is uncovered by wall and other the proper fort where the agte leads you to the quarter guard and then into the fort. Presently there is another path which is for motors which can lead uup to mess but one still has to climb satirs to reach to the mess. From quarter guard another inclined flight of stairs leads to te commandant office and from there to the mess. It si at quarter guard that a original wall painting has been preserved although refreshed every now and then which is a mirror of the past. It shows that almost everything on the northern abnk of river belongs to chitalr Scoutsand the assistant political agent who used to sit here instead of chitral.

There are three graveyards , one is inside the the fort close to mortar battery which in 1936 or at 1899 was almost outside the helm of Fort affairs, it have combined graves of British, Muslim soldiers and airmen. The Hindu graveyard which is indicated on sketch is on the east of the Fort almost three miles away. I have seen the

cemetery today and intend going to locate the Hindu shamshan garh tomorrow.

There are old maple and walnut trees everywhere, most strikingly the four maple trees at the four corners of the ground down below the mess building are eye catching, they are placed originally at the four corners of the ground in such a symmetry that their shadows almost cover the ground. Then there is another tree at the hockey ground which can now be called as football ground as none plays hockey now; it also shows how important hockey was in the past {1926}. This ground actually divides the whole complex of the fort, the barracks of troops are on the one side of ground and on the other the steep path takes the visitor into the fort arena.

Presently the No.3 Wing of Chitral Scouts, 42 Azad Kashmir Regiment and Moratri Battery of Chitral Scouts are sharing the fort, the infantry battalion is mainly using as the rear headquarters so are all the wings, all kind of stores are here, the Ghee, tea, match, charpoy, salt to name a few are located here. There is no dearth of accommodation. The Chitral Scouts training school is also here inside the fort complex. The whole fort is inclined in construction, there is hardly any level place less the hockey ground and the stony tennis court which is adjacent to the main gate of fort.

Drosh Fort 1899.

Drosh Fort's construction started in May 1899 and was completed in October 1900. The fort is on the northern bank of River Chitral, on a higher ridge overlooking the complete valley and route of River Chitral and River Madaglasht. Thus from its sitting it is obvious that main threat was from the afghans and the southern circle was the most volatile. In the ancient times the track from Bashgal in Afghanistan entered into Chitral through Arandu and then following the hill track it passes through Domel Nisar-Mirkhani-Drosh-Ayun-Chitral-Garm Chasma and then exiting through Shah Salim Pass. Thus two separate entities one on the southern bank and other on Northern Bank were flourishing. There were very few crossing points on the river and even then the hanging bridges were unable to take the full load of laden camel, horse or mule caravan, only in military expedition a force was able to cross it. In summer the river was in full fury as now and in winter the crossing was possible.

Drosh Fort is built on the ridge in a multi tier design, which is inclined, and hardly any level space is available and even less was in the past. Fort is rectangular in design having mud barracks all along the four walls; these barracks are the distinct hallmark of the fort. The wooden pier style corridor along walls are narrow yet wide enough to allow two men to cross each

other. Firing points are available after every seven feet; the best part of the fort was in its rapid concentration of fire and soldiers at all time mainly due to the design. Four piquet at four corners along with equal number of small entrances built of iron doors and one mainentrance, which in the past had a gigantic iron and wood door. Quarter guard is on the right side of main gate inside the fort.

First major expansion of the fort took place in 1921 after the third afghan War when new barracks were constructed and second one took place in 1939 and then in mid eighties it was almost complete in every sense when the headquarters were moved back to Chitral. Since then the fort is living in past nostalgia as lack of manpower is barely enough to keep it working.

In the original pattern the complete northern bank was only with the military and political administration. The road leading from Fort to the bridge on the River Chitral was and still is the property of Chitral Scouts and that include the complete bazaar with over two hundred shops. Now the bazaar which ahs sprung up along the main road is known as new bazaar and Scouts bazaar is called the old bazaar.

Initially the commandant house was inside the fort but in 1920 it was constructed outside the fort and then finally demolished in 2010 to make room for the

expansion of Scouts school. Chitral scouts garden is located across the river, this is one of the largest garden among all corps of Frontier corps, the old landing ground which was built in 1921, last had flight in 1954 and since then is abandoned and turned into a cricket field with proper brown pitch, it is a fantastic field.

Fort had three grave yards, one known as cemetery had both the Muslim and Christian military personnel's and is located at the south eastern end, the Hindu graveyard was situated a mile further east but now a days there are no remnants of that graveyard, however the other cemetery is maintained by the scouts and the army unit stationed in Drosh {they are here since 2009}.

The contractors bring fresh ration, fodder for animals, petrol and other commodities as they have been doing it for last hundred years. The Chitral Mountain Artillery is also stationed here, it has been its home base for a century and despite all other changes this has remained in vogue. Mounted infantry also originally had their birth here, the stables are still functional and the horses, mules, donkeys all live together, {mounted infantry only looks after the horses and animal transport is responsible for donkeys}.

Presently the lush green hockey field serves as football ground with daily matches being played between the asr-maghrib prayers, it is a treat to the eyes to see

such colourful attires running round a ball. In the parade ground, which is now known as Murad Ground the civilians are allowed to play the games in the evening, as there are no other sports facilities available to them, similar is the attitude towards the use of cricket field.

Mountain Hospital was also at Drosh before it was a lot shifted to the Chitral. The present half mounting barracks were once the hospital wards, there are two such barracks, the bigger one was general ward and smaller one was bifurcated into officers ward and offices. The operation room was built later in 1938 {present MRC}. All barracks inside have two rooms, one inner which is larger in size and other a small room, wooden planks and mud have been used in original construction and there is no trace of iron. The bricks were used later either in expansion or in restoration.

Fort from inside is all green, chinar, apple, pear trees are almost everywhere yet the four chinar trees at the four corners of the office barrack are worth appreciating; they were planted with precision and then looked after for long from grazing horses and other animals to reach such heights. They are as old as the fort itself.

Drosh Officers mess dining hall.

Words at times loose their value because they are used daily and for evertthing thus the word impressive may looks od but this is what it feels to be sitting here at midnight when outs ide the yellow glow of full moon is gaetting pale because tem on is now up the mess, or hours in a stoned stae of mind I have been satringa t the wtopapsses the pass on left the Chitral and on the rigt or northern leads to Madaglasht.

The hall is covered with walnut wood almost touching the ceiling all around, with ahnd carved fire palces, shoelds on wall the PMA, Engineers, Punjaab Regiment, FWO, head trophies of Markhaoor are staring from all corners with the haedamscot on the southern wall kept an eye on me while I was having the dinner alone. Thre silver trophies the bronze inafantryman holding and cahtdingw with the bayonet rifle, the big silver bowl in the centre and traditional ibex trophy without which no room of Chitral Scouts seems to be complete. On the afr end at the fire palceehalfa dozen silver ware andatray below the markhoor trophy, windows are on the southern side with ample space in the ffront to have the breakfast while ahvingalookk at the alwn and valley dwon below especially the Chitral Pass is in the centre. Ceiling is also made of wood panels with cahndeelieer hanging down , two ceiling afns and two lights on each end complees the scenery up.

Hall and mess are deserted now and they are in this state since 1992 when the headquarters move from here to Chitarl, it looks haunted now, I sat alone in dark in the ante room and felt the company of all past visitors, I thought of Commandant Colonel Murad as what made him commit suicide, I don't believe that he was upset on his posting that speaks low of him. Was he really thought of himself as indispensable after commanding the Chitarl for twelve long years, there was another commandant back in 1937-1947 but he left his post in a jovial mood so why Murad committed suicide. I have no plausible answer to his actions. Maybe he was unstable like most such persons, let's not forget that he was a poet also, a bachelor, a lost love. Who knows, maybe he was insane or he was high on that night but on what that made him took his life. Sitting and looking at the Chitarlapss I thought of the Man who would be king, it is similar to Murad's life.

Maadgalsht are another enigma, who are they and how come the Persian language and customs have survived in so many years and centuries or even milleniums. Are they lost soldiers of Darius or Feroze who was running away from Alexander, is it possible that they entered from the Bashgal Valley or Arandu and instead of going into the Chitarl valley they took the northern valley, similar may be the Alexander's soldiers took the northern western valley in their case and they

ended up at the KaalshCValley. The kalash Valley is on the opposite bank of River chitarl just a cross the Drosh.

The old acarvan route is on the southern abnkr of the river the reason being that they never wanted to cross the river with laden horses and camels. Thus the whlerouyete encompasses the southern part of present ady Chitral, including the Lutkhowvaleey leading straight to Kashkar {TirchMir}. Even the name of River chitral is controversial, from Drosh down to Arandu it should be known as River drosh, as River Chitral is only christened with this name after the amalgamation of river Lutkhow and river yarkhon just a few miles west of Chitral Town.

The Drosh has the same place in relation to chitral what Jamrud Fort has to Khyber Pass. The Chitarlsatrt starts from here and finishes at Chitarl a mere 40 odd miles this is what Chitarl was in past.

It is a strange feeling to sit alone in a room which at some time in the past had a glorious time where the presidents and prime ministers had dined and laughed, now it is haunted never to have the same glory again. The fort was constructed in 1899 and commissioned in 1900, probably this mess was constructed then or a few years later because it was almost religious to have the mess for the officers and there were few infantry battalions stationed here along with artillery pieces. From 1929 the aircraft

started making landings here it must be a gratuity for the natives to see the aircraft coming and going. What went through their minds was it an end of the world to them or the ultimate symbol of white supremacy.

The PMA shield has a history because it was presented by Major General Rahat Latif Butt who came here in 1981 but he had been here in 1954 as a cadet himself, what a feeling to be at the assembly where you have been there as a cadet and now as a commandant. He has written about that in the visitors book of Chitral Mess.

In the darkness in the solitude of the night the markhor looks almost alive, its long long hair hanging down from his throat just like a old religious man. Here the fear is not of any mortar or artillery shell as in Miranshah but at the thought of fairies, werewolves and other such things, the place looks ideal for such ventures. What about the hidden history of the mess, the scandals the murders the gossip, at least we know about one the murder and about others one has to run his imagination and there is no end to that.

It was Captain James of 14th Punjab who married the local girl in 1899 on the Christmas day the background of this is that James had gone on the hunting while on leave and it was at Osia Gol that he fell down almost killing himself but was saved by a local girl who had gone out to fetch the water and she dragged

him to safety , looked after him and even nursed him and that was the reason for that love story ending in such a happy ending. But the story did not finished here because next yaer the captain james died while on hunting at the asme place.

Full Moon at Drosh, 19th September 2013.

This time the full moon stretched for over three nights , first night at Chitral officers Mess two nights ago when I spotted it and since I was monitoring it for last one week thus I was confident about it, it rose from the mountains above the mess , the wall across the River Chitral and slowly travelled over the mess tree and making a loop came over head, playing hide and seek through the maple leaves. The Chitarl town basked in its yellow glow, I text reena about it, thought of my children and wife and mother as much of my life revolves around this full moon. In my childhood lying on the cot with my mother on the roof and watching the full moon. My aunt narrating me the stories. It was common fable that the grandma is knitting the wheel, it was called Chanda Mama. The word Chanda is since used to point towards the beloved, it is common pet name of all girls apart from gurya. Time passed by and I forgot about the full moon for decade and it was neither in military academy nor in field exercises but at Siachen in 1988

that I saw and fell in love with mon forever. I had come out of my igloo in the frozen month of January at over 18000 feet give and atke few feet but I got my insignia of mountaineering there thus it was definitely over 18000 feet. The moon outside was fascinating , I pissed which was the reason of my coming out of the awrm igloo and felt nirvana. Only then I saw the moon in its full glory. The mounatins all around as afr as eye can travel were covered in white thick cream of snow and ice. The Eagle Peak, the twin towers , the narrow cliff, the deep gorge and glacier down below were all visible and pure white. I stood there for eternity , nothing was in my mind but the sheer magnitude and amgnum of baety of nature. I was in awe of it and need not to move but at last the cold forced me to go inside. Provably next time it aws blizzard and next time it was partial cloudy and that aws the end of it.

Then came love affairs, one with my wife under the full moon , I was lying in a bushy stream just to have a glance of her when she would walk by at her after dinner walk with her colleague. Writing letters and raeding them under full moon. Then acme the tragic part and the suffering ofa lost love to be borne under the full moon. In next phase it was flying in full moon, it was always conducted in full moon conditions thus it became a second nature to be aware of it. Wathcing Karachi and surrounding islands on a calm full moon with sea waves

touching the land, even the tortoises were visible, the city lights and the harbour, the airport's runway lights and their changing colours as one approaches them in a glide. Next it was Tahiland Kohpagangan island in the arms of a German lady watching the full moon and only then I saw how the sea waves are termed as high tides and how human tides corresponds to it. Back to life and a walk under full moon with my school heart girl reena near her hostel and the aroma of the night queen flowers. The marriage and the full moon slowly and gradually just faded away, then came children and the mountains but I think I have omitted one of the most eventful full moon, the one I saw at K-2 base camp with Pink floyd and the ashish; it changed my life forever and I came back to it after few months and saw it again without any worry of food or place to sleep.

With my children I enjoyed it lying in the cool summer of Skardu for winter seasons watching it to come from the north west of my house, I enjoyed it my pack of dogs and their pups holding them in my arms, I saw it with snow all around walking alone under its spell towards the glacier with my house behind me.

Then came Glasgow, the full moon was then my link to my past, to all my life because I had left all of it for nothing, everything was gone except this full moon, I gave night duties under its light I came back from library, club, bar under its spell. I dreamed with my eyes open

when ever it awes in full glory. I had it last again at Thailand with Reen and other one at Aitchison but never again with my children and wife since Skardu. Last full moon was at Hydapass thinking about from where Alexander crossed it and then having almost five successive full moons in North Waziristan with hardly any lapse of concentration some of them were spent with the artillery duel with the miscreants going on under its light and now this one.

Now I don't think of anyone in particular, yes Reena comes to my mind my mother comes to my mind because I have seen quite of these with her lying on the cot in the village on summer nights thinking and talking of life and the beauty of it.

Dommel Nisar.

It is 1930 hours, at Dommel Nisar fort, the fort was constructed in 1942, it is bigger than Mirkani but much smaller than Drosh. It is double storied, cemented brick, thick 20 odd feet high walls with high iron gate on one end and a small exit at the other end. It is 200 yards by 50 yards in a straight plain rocky ground with river Chitral running along its western wall separated by a narrow stony track. On the further far bank which in this

case becomes the west bank or far bank is inhabited by two odd families with half a dozen females working in the small elongated field wearing red chaddar {only 30%}. The fort is constructed in an elongated pattern mainly due to the dictate of the ground thus you end up facing the rather gradual high mountain wall. On the southern end the River Chitral takes its rather second last bend and merges to the west. On the east is that is the back of the fort the again high hillock blocks the view and provides protection; the plenty of high maple trees which by any standard are not older than a century almost obscure the view.

I can hear the consistent and persistent yet pleasant noise of river water running fast, it is regularly interrupted by the prayer calls on the loud speaker, here it is really penetrating as there is no other noise to overrun it, the water flow on the other hand provides a background medley. The prayer call is brief and to the point. Dommel Nisar is the in centre between the Mirkani & Arandu, it is the last fort built by British on this River Chitral axis, ahead are the posts like Langurbat and then Arandu, on the northern side coming from Mirkani the road is excellent but alas only for a brief distance but FWO is working on the widening of the road till Arandu with UAE sponsorship which certainly will bring a strategic change both economically and culturally; defence is debatable because with the construction of

road coupled with the opening of Lowari Tunnel the centuries old issue will be resolved, a loop is thus being provided to the Afghans and people living in Central Asia to move freely southward through Arandu Pass via Dommel Nisar-Mirkhani, turning left and moving through Lowari in winter too. It is the shortest, safest and most economical route from the Mughul heartland crossing Oxus and then instead of moving through Broghul into Chitral and then crossing Darkot Pass towards the Gilgit and into Kohistan before hitting river Indus. Other route traditional route is through Zebak-following Bashgol Valley into former Kafiristan and present Nuristan of Afghanistan , hitting Arandu at Birkot. The earlier caravan had no option but to follow the river which now is known as Kunar and hitting Jalalabad or the Kabul- Kunar conflux which roughly 100 miles south of Arandu enters into plains of Peshawar; the Khyber Pass. The major limitation in the past were the militant and often hostile tribes who each eyed the trade caravan as a booty , they as honourable tribesmen merely preferred the caravans to pass through their territory and in return getting the security toll. Now this all has taken new dimension; the sectarian vermin, the majority of population living near Oxus is the follower of shia and Ismaili sect which the Sunni tribes of Nuristan, Kunar, Jalalabad, Kabul, Bajaur, Khar, and Dir are not very friendly; unfriendly is rather a very diplomatic word because much of present day violence

in the area is mainly and chiefly attributed to this madness along with historical variations.

Dommel nisar was constructed mainly for any afghan threat and not the perceived Russian threat . Drosh was constructed in 1900 and Mirkani in 1940 thus in between these years the major and only serious conflict after the signing of Durand Line Pact in 1893; was the Third Afghan War of 1919. Mirkani-Dommel Nisar Axis is rather the exhibition ground of great game and there is no solid logic to deny the perception that almost thousand years ago the similar defensive fortification and strategy was adopted by the Kafirs against the invading Aryans and later Turk Muslims, the only pint of difference is on the choice of banks of river as the line of fortifications. Even today the old track route is visible on the far bank which is the edge of kafirs homeland , the Kafiristan.

Dommel Nisar remained a quite , isolated, lonely place where time seems to have stand still since it was constructed, it was awaken after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the thousands of Afghan refugees entering into Chitral through this one route as all others were desolated. These Afghans made mud villages along the banks where ever it was available, those were the days that world was in favour of them and the people of Chitral welcomed them with open heart after all they were brothers; mostly. In 1962 Pakistan had exchanged

the territory with Afghanistan , gaining the General Ayub ridge where a post bears his name across a mile in Torkham and in return giving them the area in Dost Muhammad which is across Arandu. Thus with this act the few hundred odd families all of a sudden found themselves as part of another passport, currency and laws. As a convention these people all along the Durand Line are given right to move freely across the border. At dost Muhammad the situation is no different, there are 40 odd men of Arandu who daily go across the border to open their shops in Afghanistan by crossing over the bridge, reciprocally there are average 20 odd families visit Pakistan daily just for medical purpose.

After sunset the Fort's lone gate is closed and life begins inside the fort , the mosque is outside the fort and it is only the Isha prayers which keeps the gate open. The additional battery of mortars and gun s have extended the fort southward with new mud boundary wall coming up, this all took palce after the attack of august 2009 which was mainly , chiefly along Mirkani-Dommel Nisar-Arandu axis. Miscreants the Afghans came from the west across the river, they descended down from mountain after darkness making use of lapse of security atBridge which was kept open contrary to the age old convention of closing. Three posts were attacked physically and all others including the Dommel Nisar and Mirkhani Forts were put under fire attack to keep

them down there by restricting the reinforcements and gaining time. On that deadly night 22 Chitral scouts embraced shahadat with Sepoy Nasr Minallah standing alone in his post for well over thirty hours and there by stalling the grand plan of the attackers. After this incident army moved in to plug the gaps and to act as a deterrent potent force, artillery battery ex 101 Mountain regiment commanded by Major Ahmed Nawaz was the first one to move in with their headquarters at Mirkani, having observers at Dommel Nisar and ahead. One of the Northern Light Infantry regiment{3} also moved in followed by 42 AK and 33 Baluch Regiment whose commanding officer along with General officer commanding 17 Division embraced shahadat in an IED blast on 17th September 2013.

Day starts with afjr prayers and then slowly moved in, most of the strength is deployed on post thus remaining have to act as reserve and provide administration efforts. There is no fax machine and mail official comes through Mirkani which is collected at past ten hundred hours. The wireless communication works perfectly both for official and private talk. Water is in abundance due to the spring as river water is muddy in summer. Electricity is also provided through hydel and also from Shushi power house. Dry ration is collected from Drosh Fort and fresh action is supplied by contractor.

2130 hours. I had just ventured out and spotted the fort door ajar with no sentry visible this is dangerous. These small lapses of security can cost very dearly, i have a feel to understand that how these fine men and fine officers can be so callous about the security. This dilemma is everywhere especially in corps like Chitral having an area so large that commandant is unable to keep an eye but it is not the commandant's job either it is the wing commander's responsibility . In the morning when we came to Dommel Nisar and i mean myself, Major Ahmed Nawaz and two young captains, none of us was armed and that is a very bad message for the youngsters . There were gunmen in the raer but officers were not armed and none was carrying water . anyway i have locked my room from inside but its of no use in case of attack.

The journey from Mirkani takes almost 45 minutes of drive, the track is not that bad rather it is grand when compared to the other parts of Chitral, no dangerous curves still any novice can end up at river bed and that was one reason i sat in the raer seat amidst two captains they insisted on mine sitting in front but i regretted and rather sat with them giving all the pleasure of window seat. The scenery is similar to any other part of northern areas, a river running along, track winding through the mountains occasional vehicles carrying wood coming from Arandu direction , i just

noted only four vehicles enroute one reason is at the road ahead of Dommel Nisar is closed due to mud slides. I saw the Katusi post enroute and the bridge over it which has been rebuilt by army engineers, the FWO camp and then few more turns and the fort was in sight. The rocks lying on the side of road are iron ore which is precious commodity. No shop, no village on the road; we entered the Dommel Fort. The track goes upward and then stops at a parking area with few trucks standing, the fort gate and the silhouette of its wall, the wing commander's office which was constructed only recently by Lieutenant colonel Tauqeer stands out as a piece of architecture. The maple tree has been preserved and it goes through the verandah of the office, beautiful design. The aroma of fresh pure natural wood fills the air when I entered it. Lieutenant colonel Naveed is the wing commander, he is from artillery, slim but very cordial, jovial, humble and courteous. I glanced at the wing commander's board and saw Major Ali Imran's name over there.

Naveed is a good company and its after along that I have enjoyed conversation nothing intellectual just pure military fun, he was DQ in Lahore brigade{114} and how the things work there, one really feels pity with the staff officers but now he is enjoying it. Another retired officer came he is working with FWO had been working in the Chitral Scouts in the past, from OTS and from COAS regiment but nothing extraordinary about

him same talk about plots and other. He was narrating how he was swindled by his own coursemate with his commutation. He left and then after some time we had the lunch in SM's office which is adjacent to wing commander's. Lunch was good, rice, chicken fried but good one and the standard Mountain Dew cold drink followed by the fruit of pears, apples and grapes. It was evening time the artillery offices left for Mirkani. The Dommel Nisar life is slow rather boorish and lonely and evening games seems to be the right recipe for it; they play volleyball the king of troops games.

Volleyball is an excellent game requires little space and over sixteen players can play. Not smashing but gentle hitting, players keep on coming and joining the teams, one team led by the captain and soon wing commander also joined in both good players. Game lasted till Maghreb prayers when it was called off.

I did not consumed my dinner rather went to work and slept around midnight.

26th September 2013, 0830 hours.

The day is routine, everyone getting up late, the sun rays are falling on the western bank of the river and the fort is still shrouded in the dim light. The lone rooster has been calling his shouts on regular basis but with no hen in sight it calms down. I had got my first cup of tea and now waiting for the clothes to come back from

dhobi. Another long yell from rooster. On 24th September 2013, i left drosh at 1500 hours for the Mirkhani, it seems difficult proposition to do so because i am lazy and if i spend a night at one place then it seems almost a miracle if i am able to leave but i had to do so .

Injigan is the western most valley of district Chitral, its literal meaning in local dialect is ‘prosperous’. On its east is tehsils Mulkhow, on west Afghanistan, north Hindukush and in south is Chitral Town and tehsils. TirchMir the highest peak of the Hindukush is situated here, near Karim abad, Rokhon is the second biggest peak situated near Village Sainak, people calls TirchMir as the abode of fairies.

Injigan is divided into three valleys namely Karimaabd, Urkari & Garmchasma. Weather is extreme in winter which blocks almost all ground routes due to heavy snow, spring starts from April onwards. Lotkow is the other name for Injigan, River Lotkow is the largest river of the valley which originates from Kotal Doawra and joins River Chitral near Chitral airport. River Bagosht, Othrai, Gol, Urkari and Karimaabd stream all joins in River Lotkow before it terminates. The river is famous for its clear water and trout Fish. There is mainly one crop in Injigan except in Bahtooli, Shigoor, Momi, Mough and Mardan Koh. The best grapes are produced in area Mough which are distilled to make local wine. Injigan has many other peculiarities but it is the presence

of natural sulphuric warm water which is available year around; it is this which makes the Injigan as the most neat and clean valley in whole of northern areas especially when in other areas people seldom takes bath in winter. Mough is famous for the Chitrali patti the hand woven cloth. Urkari valley is the most under developed area of the Injigan, there was not even a jeep able track till 1983. Potatoes of Injigan are also very famous and in great demand. The very first person to be enrolled in Chitral Scouts in 1903 was from Yoft, Shaib Ali Lal son of Khokhan Baig, he later rose to the rank of subedar major the very first subedar major who was a non Kator⁶ he retired in 1932. Sultan Jawan alias Manoor, is another brave son of soil who took active part in the Gilgit War of 1947. Sultan Khan Murdaan was born in 1924 at village Murdaan and join Chitral scouts in 1945 and took active part in 1948 War as Bren gunner, he embraced shahadat 40 kilometres short of Srinagar in a hand to hand fight with enemies. Another stalwart of the area and of 1947 war is Islam Shah who retired as naib subedar, he was enrolled in Chitral Scouts in 1932, he died a natural death in 1990. Ghair Dum Shah Chaweelo who has died in 2002 was another brave scout of Chitral.

⁶ Muhammad rahim, tareekh Injigan, hafiz , chitral, 2006, pp, 16-58.

Injigan has a predominant Ismaili sect adherents, there are Fatimid also who are regarded as the non .

The cultural history and heritage of the Injigan is heavily inspired by the Tajikistan, Badkhashan, Yarkhun, Kashgir which is a logical conclusion of the valley being as the entrance into the Chitral valley. The Jinan China utensils are a speciality of the area which used to come from the Kashgir and china; they were almost unbreakable and above all had the uniqueness to point out the poison in food thus these were very popular with the ruling class. Silver Mushraba also comes from Faizabad in Afghanistan and are given as dowry utensils. Kohkan Baigi si the name of extra large big Deg which were imported in thousands by the prince Kohkan Baig and hence it carries his name even today. Ghaan is another utensil which is made of walnut wood it si big in size the smaller version is called Langri. Tong is a vessel used for keeping milk, lassi and curd, it is the smallest of all utensils. Ghorī si the equivalent of Madaani which is used for making curd out of milk.

In terms of weapons a sword is called a Khonghar, it is very thin at the edge and in old times it was always dipped in poison water before the battle. Shield is known as Khaari, Bow & arrow are called Dhoorwan – Weishu, Nairang is a battle dagger worn around the body. Dumpla was a firearm using cartridge

and Dumpla por and Rupal are rather the basic forms of firearms.

The weighing measurements are also different, Batti si 2 ½ kilogram, Kondak is ten kilogram, Beera is 20 kilogram, wara is 60 kilograms. Aichamoot is smaller than an inch, Dasheet is smaller than afoot and Hoost is larger than a foot but smaller than two feet.

In terms of dress the Injigan is famous for woollen cloth , caps for male and female are both made here, female cap is colourful and a must item for the bride known as 'khoi suak'. The woollen floor mat is known as 'Pelsibick Koreek'.

Chitralli months are related to the culture for instance February is knwon as urian for the birds {duck}that arrive here, name of adys are as in Persian , Shaanba, Do shaanba ...etc.